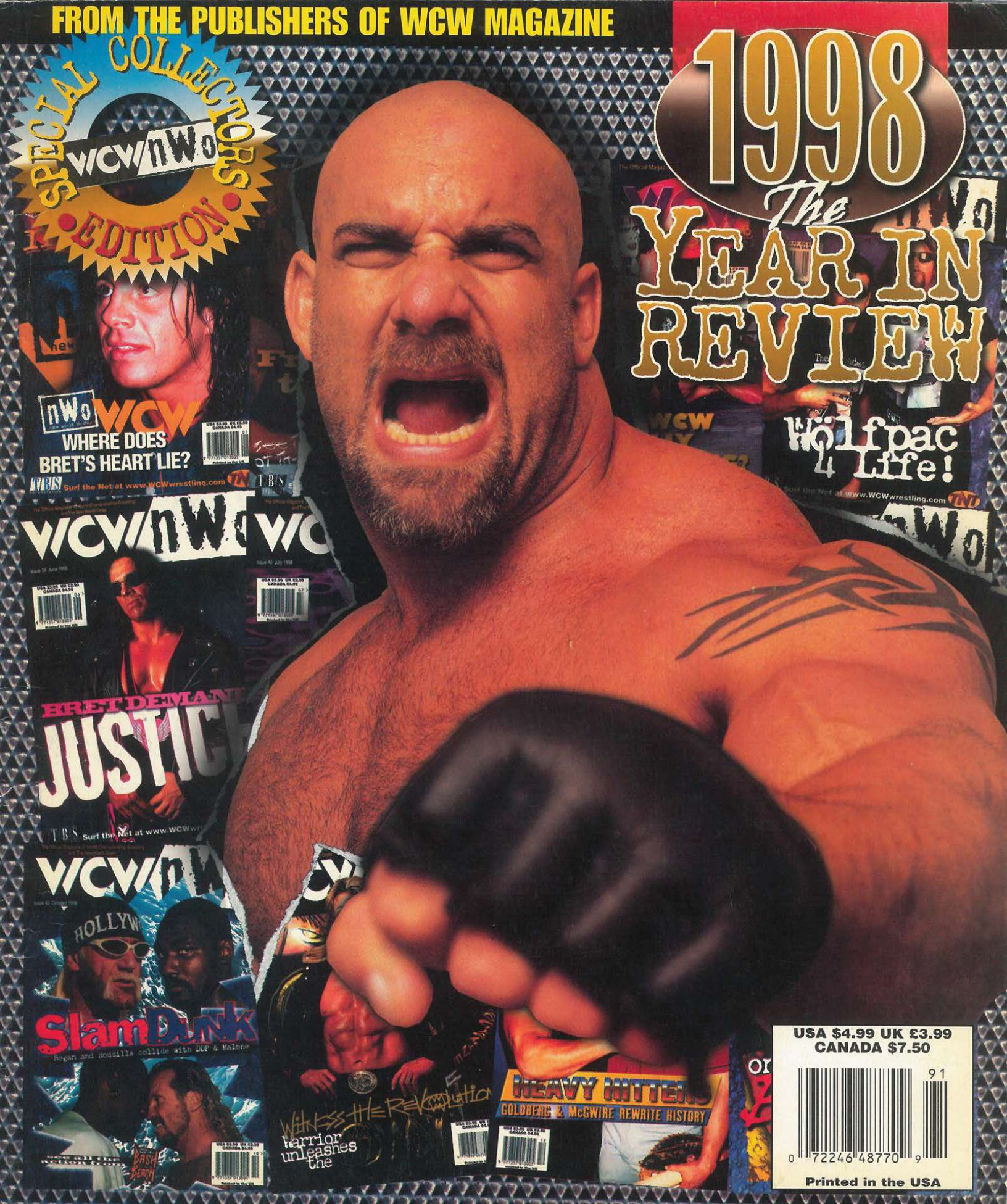
FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF WCW MAGAZINE

SPECIAL COLLECTORS EDITION

WCW/nWo

1998 The YEAR IN REVIEW



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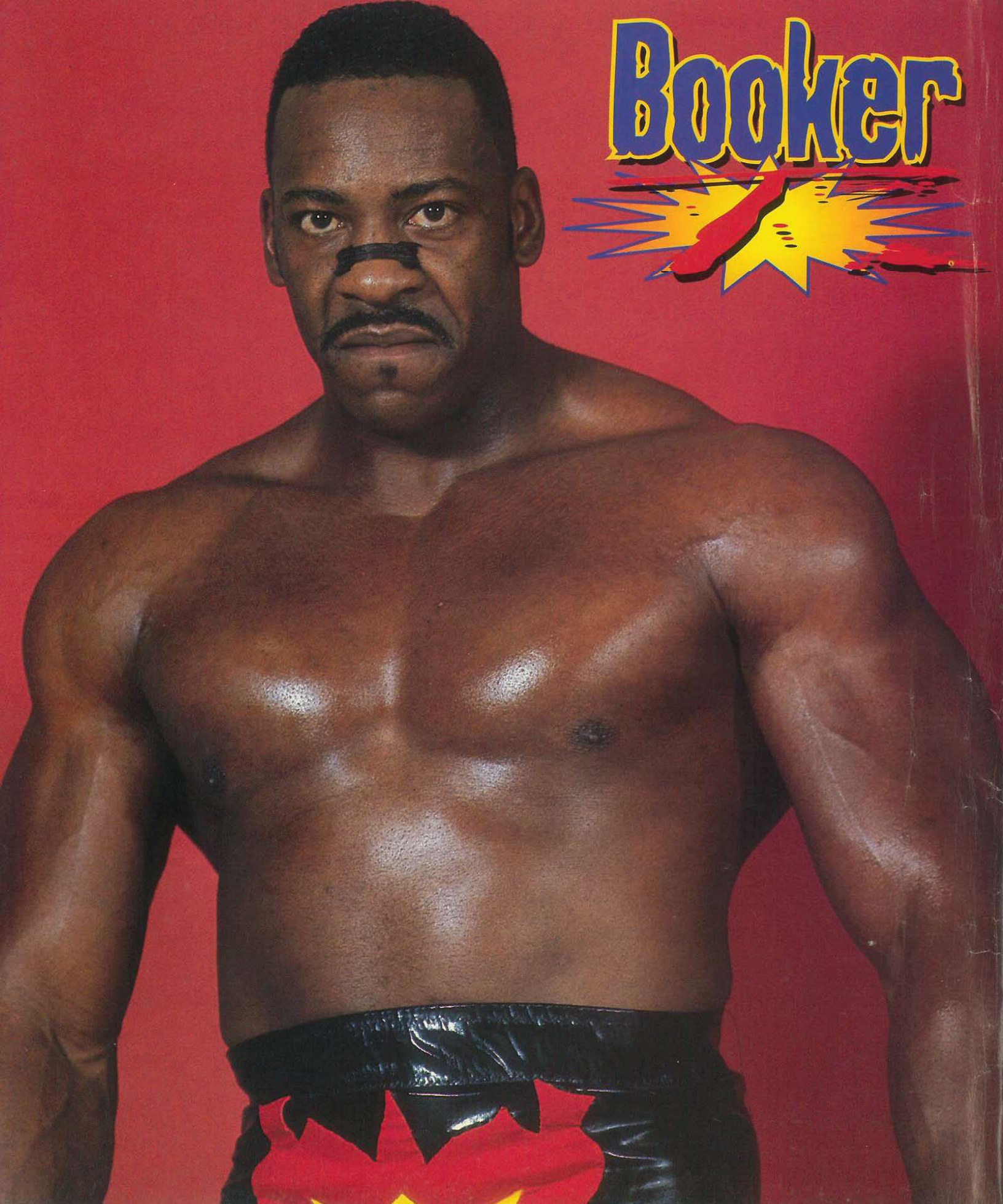
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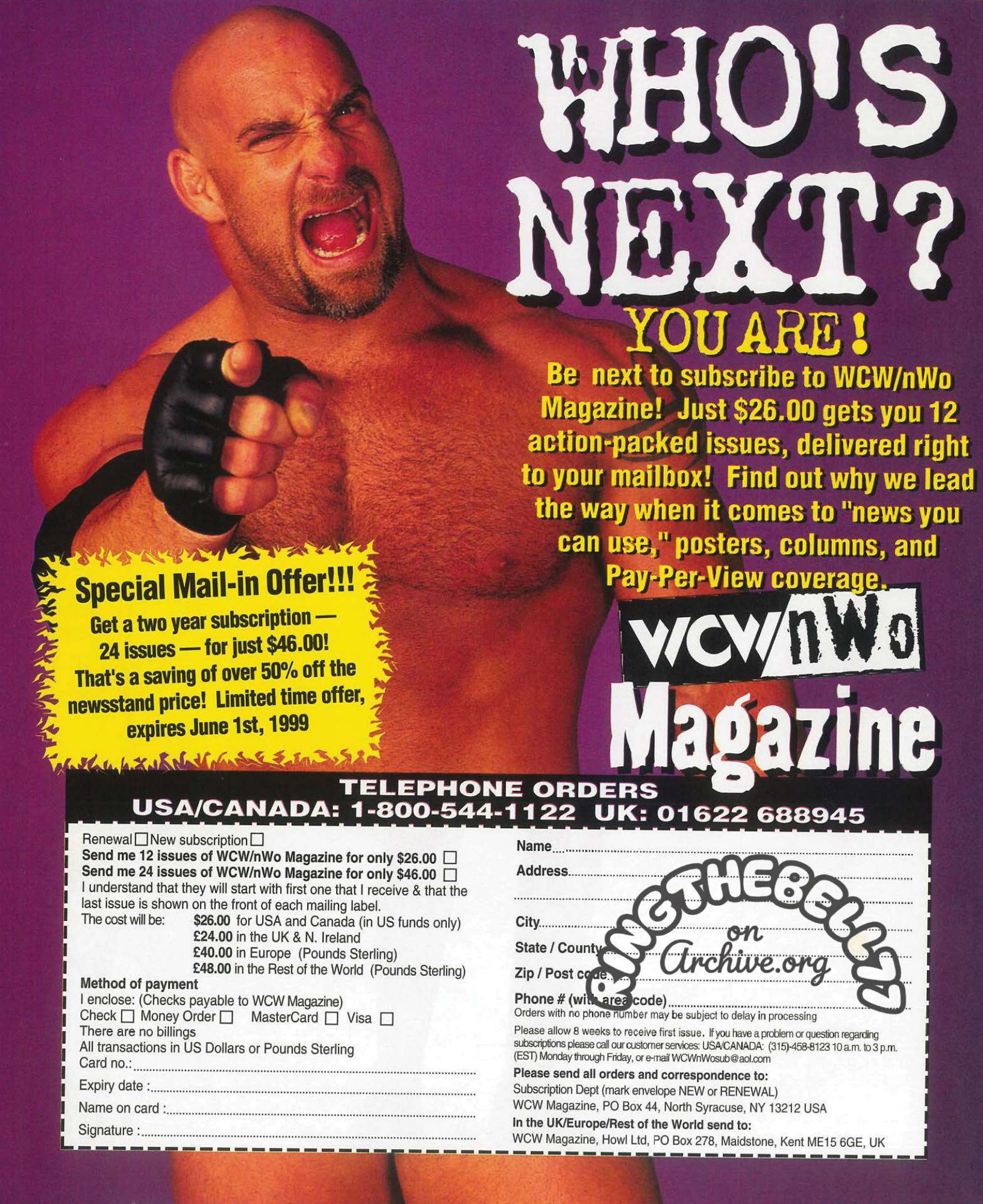

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1998 The Year in Review

COLIN BOWMAN
Editor-in-Chief/Publisher
Email:WCWnWoMAG@aol.com

PATTY THERRE
Executive Editor
Email:WCWnWoEdit@aol.com

LISA STURGIS
Managing Editor
Email:EditWCW@aol.com

GAYLE STOVER
Photo Editor
Email:WCWnWoFoto@aol.com

BOB SMITH
Staff Writer

COLIN BOWMAN, GAYLE STOVER
ROSS FORMAN, TODD KAPLAN
SCOTT CUNNINGHAM
Photography

REBECCA FOX
Editorial Assistant

ELIZABETH BLANKENSHIP
Assistant Photo Editor

DONNA CHESLER
Subscription Service Manager
Email:WCWnWoSub@aol.com

MARTIN COX
Production Manager

LOUANN HALL, ANTHONY PAYNE
Customer Service

KAREN NELSON
Administrator

BILL JOHNSON
Research Assistant

STEVE LAMPON, GAVIN MOWER
Executive Art Directors

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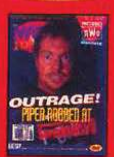

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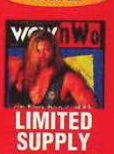

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EDITOR'S note

1998 was a very exciting year for WCW Magazine and for me in particular. Normally, I would take this opportunity to detail my favorite moments, but there were just so many that I decided I would just reflect back on the covers of 1998's magazines. It was a year where things changed at breakneck speed and the magazine covers reflect that best.

We started the year with Bret Hart with the question, *Where does Bret's heart lie?* We questioned whether he was WCW or nWo. As time passed, he proved he certainly wasn't WCW, but then again, he never actually officially joined the nWo. Today, even with the benefit of hindsight, the only conclusion we can draw is that Bret's heart lies with Bret.

Next up was one of the year's biggest heroes, DDP, pictured with his big hero, Muhammad Ali.

Another issue followed, this time questioning, *Does WCW really support Sting?* Sting obviously felt they didn't and went off to join the Wolfpac.

Ironically, we featured Hall & Nash together with the headline: *Wolfpac 4-Life*. Although, they have now reunited, there was a time when "4-Life" actually didn't mean for very long at all.

Bret Hart time again. This time, Bret couldn't make up his mind whether he was mad at Hogan, who had "stolen" his belt many lifetimes ago, or Sting who he said had stolen his finishing maneuver. Either way, it was summed up under the headline: *Bret Hart demands justice!*

We had no idea Goldberg would have become World Champion when we decided to put him on the cover of Issue 40 under the headline: *The Future*. Prophetic words or what?

In light of the defections from WCW to the nWo, and the nWo to the Wolfpac, and friends stabbing each other in the back, we asked the question, *Who can you trust?* Of the eight superstars pictured, only Roddy Piper didn't let anyone down.

Rude and Hennig earned their cover, *Mercenaries* by being the least trustworthy of anyone. They went crazy, though, when they discovered they were sharing the cover with a miniature K-Dogg, spraying the praises of the Wolfpac.

Slam Dunk proclaimed the cover of Issue 42 with Hogan, Rodman, Malone, and DDP featured, as we recounted the unprecedented buildup to, and epic battle from Bash at the Beach.

The return of the most enigmatic wrestler, Warrior, dominated Issue 44 in a way he never did inside the ring. After the hype and hoopla he lost to Hogan and vanished to who knows where.

The cover of Issue 45 was a great coup. *Heavy Hitters* featured the then-WCW Heavyweight Champion with the newly crowned "Home Run King," Mark McGwire. This was also the issue where we began including the pull-out four page posters.

Finally, and yet again, we MUST have clairvoyant powers. On Issue 46, Kevin Nash was featured *On the Road*. It would be an amazing road that ended at Starrcade when he ended Goldberg's undefeated streak to achieve his dream and become WCW World Heavyweight Champion.

1998 was a successful and memorable year to be sure. Thanks to all of you for your continued support, and an extra special thank you to everyone who worked so hard to ensure that WCW Magazine continually raised its standards.

I hope you enjoy the new format and extra pages in this magazine, as this will become the standard that will carry WCW Magazine forward into the new millennium. Look out for Issue 50 on the newsstands.

Regards,
Colin Bowman

Therre's Thoughts

It's impossible for me to believe that the year 1998 has come and gone so quickly! It seems only a month or so ago we were working on Issue 35, the first issue in 1998. The publishing business consists of deadlines and changes, "late-breaking" stories, and great timely interviews that can end up a day late and a dollar short by the time they hit the newsstands.

1998 was the year that I really grew as a wrestling fan, and as a writer and editor. I watched as alliances changed, I moaned along with every other fan when Scott Hall turned against Kevin Nash, I shook my head sadly when the Steiners broke up followed by Harlem Heat. I looked to the rafters when the nWo was ganging up on a lone wrestler. I cringed when luchadors and cruiserweights like Rey Mysterio, Jr., Juventud Guerrera, and Billy Kidman executed a mind-boggling maneuver that I was sure would send them to the hospital for the next 20 years.

I think I most vividly remember one incident because it really brought home the idea that this business that I work in, that I am a part of, isn't all just "fun and games," as some in the mainstream media would like us all to believe. That incident took place during Thunder, April 22nd, 1998 in Columbia, SC. I was watching a good tag match between Rick Steiner & Lex Luger and Buff Bagwell & Scott Steiner. As the match advanced, Buff took a "routine" bump, one that wrestlers take every day in the ring. But almost immediately, I knew that there was much more wrong with Buff than a sore neck. The entire crowd in the arena fell silent. They knew it, too. This was the real deal. As the announcers tried to keep people abreast of what was happening, I was watching in horror as a great young athlete lie on the mat, motionless. It was no longer a matter of nWo or WCW. We all knew. Whether it was the production staff, the crew, the executives, the announcers, the reporters and photographers, or the fans, we all realized we were watching our worst nightmare come true before our eyes.

The memory of that night would remain with me as I continued to interview and report on the wrestlers, a memory that actually gave me a better understanding of just what these men do in the ring for us, the fans. I believe it made me a more thoughtful interviewer, perhaps even a more thoughtful person.

1998 had its lighter moments too! Eddy Guerrero drove poor Chavo, Jr. crazy, and we ended up with a shorn Chavo carrying a stick hobby horse named Pepe to the ring. Chris Jericho slipped a few notches on the sanity scale when he went to Washington, D.C. to research his conspiracy theory, then later debuted his bodyguard extraordinaire, Ralphus. Dean Malenko went "home," but returned in disguise to drive Jericho further over the edge.

And there were the emotional moments: Goldberg winning first the U.S., then the coveted Heavyweight title, usurping the seemingly invincible Hollywood Hogan; Hacksaw Jim Duggan's heartfelt speech to the Thunder crowd about his kidney cancer and his vow to fight on; Ric Flair's triumphant return to the ring to reunite the Horsemen and chastise WCW President Eric Bischoff.

There were shocks and surprises at every turn. And through it all, we at the magazine, were given the seemingly insurmountable task of trying to make sense where there seemed to be none, trying to capture the moment before the moment passed, and trying to bring to you, the readers, the most up-to-date information possible.

This year we're going to party like it's, well, 1999! And we hope you all come along with us for the ride!

Patty

Patty

1998 Championship Honor Roll

WCW World Heavyweight Champions

02-22-98	Sting (5) wins vacant belt	San Francisco, CA
04-19-98	Randy Savage (3)	Denver, CO
04-20-98	Hollywood Hogan (4)	Colorado Springs, CO
07-06-98	Goldberg	Atlanta, GA
12-27-98	Kevin Nash	Washington, DC

WCW World Tag Team Champions

01-12-98	The Outsiders (4) defeat The Steiner Brothers	Jacksonville, FL
02-09-98	The Steiners (7)	El Paso, TX
02-22-98	The Outsiders (5)	San Francisco, CA
05-17-98	Sting [2] & Giant [2]	Worcester, MA
07-21-98	Scott Hall [1] & Giant [3]	Salt Lake City, UT
10-26-98	Rick Steiner [8] & Kenny Kaos	Phoenix, AZ
Title declared vacant		

WCW United States Heavyweight Champions

04-19-98	Raven defeated DDP	Denver, CO
04-20-98	Goldberg	Colorado Springs, CO
Title vacated		
07-21-98	Bret Hart defeated DDP for the vacant title	Salt Lake City, UT
08-10-98	Lex Luger (5)	Rapid City, SD
08-13-98	Bret Hart (2)	Fargo, ND
10-26-98	Diamond Dallas Page (2)	Phoenix, AZ
11-30-98	Bret Hart (3)	Chattanooga, TN

WCW World Television Champions

02-16-98	Rick Martel defeated Booker T.	Tampa, FL
02-22-98	Booker T (2)	San Francisco, CA
05-04-98	Fit Finlay	Indianapolis, IN
06-14-98	Booker T (3)	Baltimore, MD
08-10-98	Chris Jericho	Rapid City, SD
11-30-98	Konnan	Chattanooga, TN
12-28-98	Scott Steiner (2)	Baltimore, MD

WCW World Cruiserweight Champions

01-08-98	Juventud Guerrera defeated Ultimo Dragon	Daytona Beach, FL
01-15-98	Rey Mysterio Jr. (3)	Lakeland, FL
01-24-98	Chris Jericho (3)	Dayton, OH
05-17-98	Dean Malenko (4)	Worcester, MA
06-15-98	Chris Jericho (4)	Uniondale, NY
08-08-98	Juventud Guerrera (2)	Sturgis, SD
09-14-98	Kidman	Greenville, SC
11-16-98	Juventud Guerrera	Wichita, KS
11-22-98	Kidman (2)	Auburn Hills, MI

Figures in parenthesis represent times title held as an individual or part of a team

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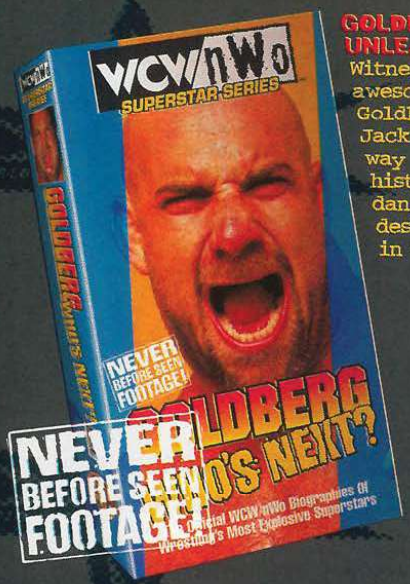

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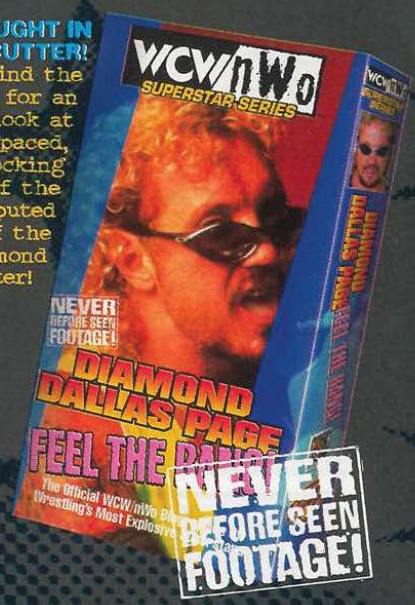

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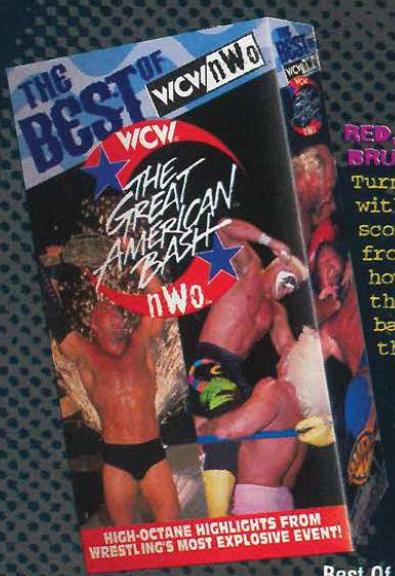

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1998 The Year In Review

1998 — A year so spectacular we had to devote a whole issue to review it. 12 Pay-Per-Views featured some of the most dramatic wrestling bouts ever. 52 Nitros and 40 Thunders kept WCW at the forefront of cutting-edge television programming.

It was a year of alliances and betrayals, new endeavors and traditional values, surprises and jolts. Most of all, 1998 was a year filled with some of the best professional wrestling to date, from the newly debuted Thunder, to Saturday Night, to Nitro and, of course, on Pay-Per-View.

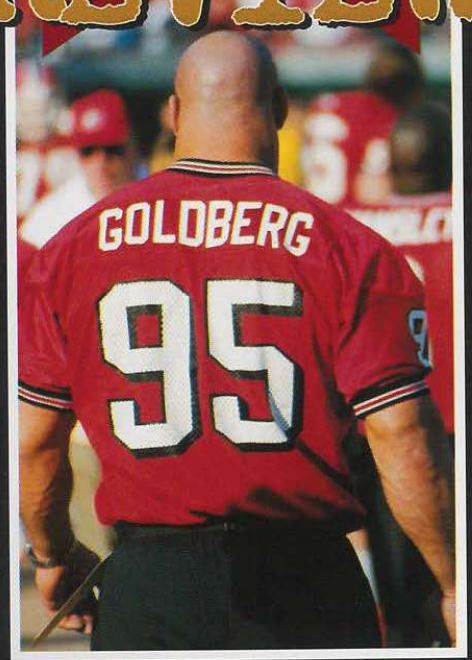
1998 will be remembered as the year that WCW, against the odds, turned the two-hour Nitro into a phenomenally successful weekly three-hour program. Then, in an unprecedented move, threw a new two-hour show into the mix. The fans were rabid for the concept and made Thunder a ratings grabber week after week.

Breaking all records, merchandise flew off the shelves, arena shows were consistently sold out, and more people watched the Pay-Per-Views than in any other year in WCW history.

However, with all this success came some dissension. Ric Flair was sued for failure to report to work and a battle for the ages ensued between "The Nature Boy" and President Eric Bischoff. Sting transformed from an eerie loner into a hip Wolfpac member, joining former enemies Kevin Nash and Scott Hall. Not to be upstaged, Scott Hall defected and turned on his best friend, Kevin Nash.

It was the year of gang warfare. As if one nWo wasn't enough, it split into two distinct factions as the players chose sides. Eddy Guerrero formed the IWo, Raven formed The Flock, and the Horsemen reunited in an emotional in-ring celebration.

The cruiserweights really took off in 1998. These high-flyers captivated the fans with their awesome agility and death defying maneuvers. Fans stood up and took notice of the luchadors and other smaller wrestlers. 1998 surely was the year of the "little big men."



An influx of new faces cropped up and upset the balance of power as each vied for a coveted place in World Championship Wrestling.

Celebrities were at ringside, backstage, and in the ring as WCW garnered more mainstream publicity. Stars from film, sports, and television showed up to see — and be seen — on WCW programming. Most notably, talk show host Jay Leno, his band leader Kevin Eubanks, and basketball greats Karl Malone and Dennis Rodman, who all stepped between the ropes to try their luck in the ring.

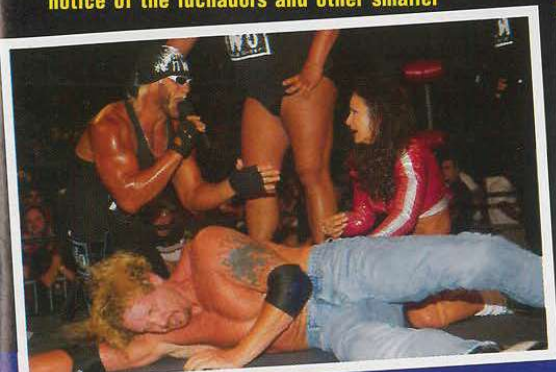
Meanwhile, wrestlers were being booked as featured guests on talk and other television shows, while others took some time off to appear in movies. 1998 was a year of media attention and scrutiny. Highlighting the year was TV Guide's decision to put Hollywood Hogan and Goldberg on the covers of their popular periodical. WCW was everywhere and the television ratings showed that World Championship Wrestling truly was the king of cable.

So much was evolving and changing, so many feuds were starting and ending.

Established stars increased their reputations in top-notch matches, rookies became stars, and in the process, the injury list became a who's who of wrestlers, as they took the matches to new levels of intensity.

And while all this was going on, a man in simple black trunks and wrestling boots was taking the sport by storm. Bill Goldberg captured the world's hearts as he reached an amazing 173-0 record before losing to Kevin Nash in what can only be described as a tainted victory by the Wolfpac leader. Never before had any wrestler been so loved by the fans and respected by his peers in such a short time after his debut.

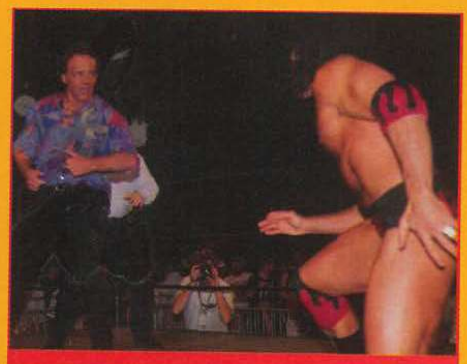
Here's the news, action, and behind-the-scenes gossip that made 1998 a truly memorable year.



JANUARY

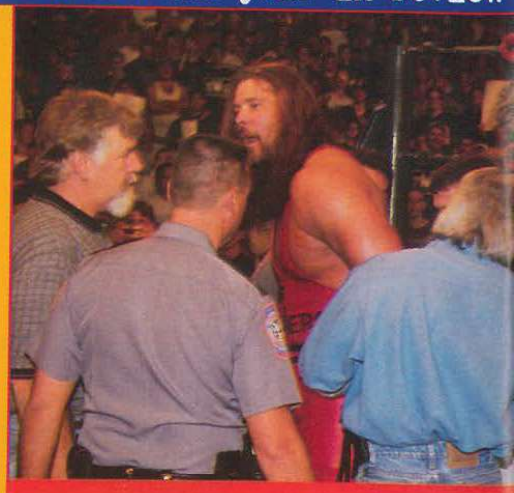
THUNDER DEBUTS: Thursday, January 8th, was the launch date of a new and exciting live show, Thunder on TBS. Based on the incredible popularity of Monday Nitro, WCW decided to launch a second wrestling show for those who couldn't wait a full week for their WCW fix. Although some naysayers claimed four (soon to be five) live hours of pro wrestling programming would be overkill, Thunder started out strong, breaking the ratings record for a debuting cable show, and remains an integral part of WCW's cutting-edge programming. Combining clips from previous Nitros, solid wrestling matches, and superb interviews, Thunder took WCW to another level in pro wrestling programming, and proved you can never have too much of a good thing.

STING'S CHAMPIONSHIP STORY: Most WCW fans were in agreement that the "Stinger's" victory over Hollywood Hogan at Starrcade '97 was a fitting way to end that year, but as 1998 began, trouble was brewing in World title land. Commissioner J.J. Dillon had ordered a rematch between Hogan and Sting on December 29th's Nitro because of Bret Hart's interference at Starrcade, but that rematch proved to be every bit as controversial and inconclusive as the original. Faced with legal battles and mountains of red tape, Dillon was forced to make a decision that sickened the entire wrestling community. In early January, he called Sting to the ring and ordered him to give up the title he had worked so hard to win. "You're a dead man," Sting warned Hogan, and the title was held up until their rematch on February 22nd at SuperBrawl.

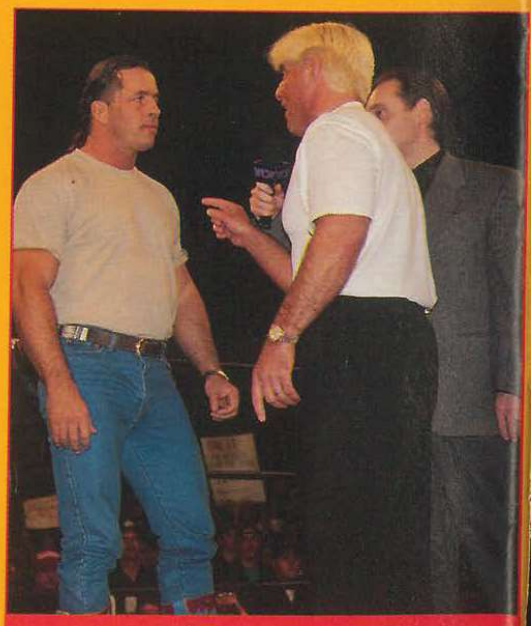


DIRTY DUSTY: The continuing saga of the nWo continued unabated, and many of the matches at the Souled Out PPV on January 24th in Dayton, OH, proved that point. Early in the event, former AWA World champion and current WCW broadcaster Larry Zbyszko was led to the ring by his longtime friend Dusty Rhodes for his bout against Scott Hall, who was accompanied by nWo pledge Louie Spicolli. The unthinkable occurred when Rhodes, along with Hall and Spicolli, attacked the "Living Legend." The wrestling world was shocked and saddened by the actions of the "American Dream," but it was clear the man who during the early-eighties ranked as the sport's most popular star, was now the latest turncoat to join the nWo.

PUT THAT JACKKNIFE AWAY: In a violent match filled with outside interference by Hollywood Hogan and Eric Bischoff, Kevin Nash pinned the virtually unbeatable Giant, severely injuring the big man's neck with a Jackknife power bomb. The vicious move caused the Giant's head and neck to crash awkwardly to the mat. Replays showed Giant was just inches away from being totally paralyzed. WCW Commissioner J.J. Dillon banned that move soon after, levying steep fines to Nash (that were reportedly paid by Hogan). Penalties reached as high as $100,000, but even that fine and arrests by ring security could not stop Nash from using the brutal maneuver. The debate over whether the power bomb should be banned was a hot topic among fans and mat experts alike for the rest of the winter.



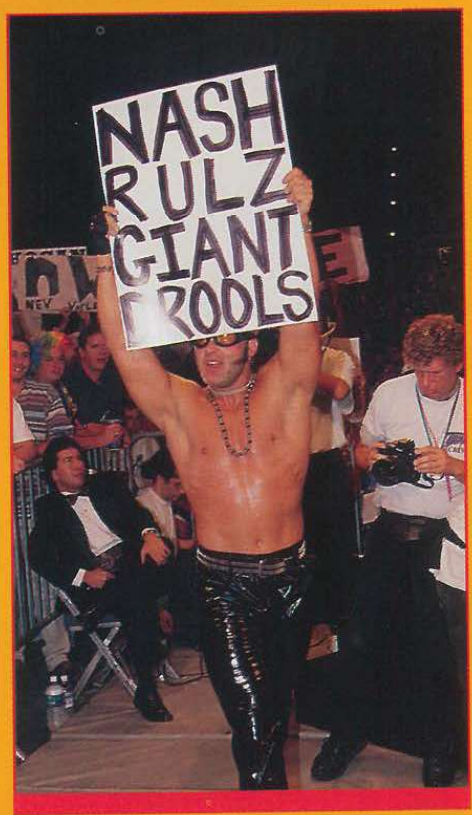
UNCHAINED HART?: Following his WCW debut, Bret "Hitman" Hart was eager to make a name for himself in the world's most prestigious wrestling organization — but his first challenge came from an unlikely source. Ric Flair, ever the proud former champion, took serious issue with Hart's claim that he is "the best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be." Flair interrupted interviews with Hart by Mean Gene Okerlund on WCW Monday Nitro, attacks were waged back and forth, and from there everyone knew their encounter at Souled Out would be a classic. For wrestling purists, the bout was a dream match. Both of these veteran grapplers used every bit of offense in their legendary arsenals to try and vanquish the other. In the end, Hart superplexed Flair from the top turnbuckle, then caught the "Nature Boy" in his sharpshooter to score a submission victory. When the final bell tolled, it appeared that Hart and Flair had gained a



mutual respect for each other, and many fans were glad to see that Bret had reverted to the respected scientific wrestler he once was. But Hart's boyish smile belied his true cunning, as Flair and WCW would find out.

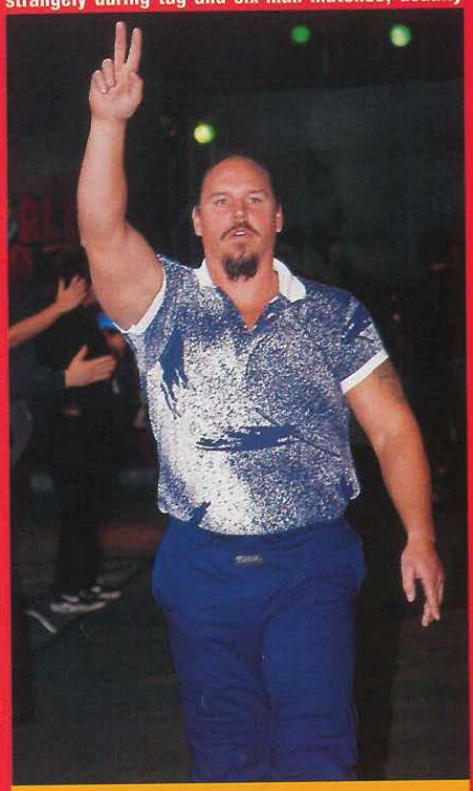
CRUISIN' FOR A TITLE: "LionHeart" Chris Jericho defeated Rey Mysterio, Jr. for the Cruiserweight Championship at Souled Out, the third time the title had changed hands that month: Juventud Guerrera had defeated Ultimo Dragon on January 8th, then Mysterio took the title from Guerrera a week later. While the Heavyweight title was locked up in controversy, it was clear that WCW's cruiserweights were gunning for this prestigious belt with everything they had, and the belt would be defended more than any other WCW Championship — often more than once per week. "Winning this belt is the pinnacle of my career," said Jericho, but did he mean it or was he just playing us all for suckers, as usual?

FLOCK YOU: Raven's Flock continued to be an irritant, especially the sign-bearing Lodi. Itchy, scratchy Kidman pawed at his body and rarely changed his ring attire, but proved to be one of the most promising cruiserweights in WCW. At various times, other Flock members included Riggs, Saturn, seven-foot-tall Reese, Horace, Van Hammer, and Sick Boy. What was the power that the devious Raven held over this talented contingent? No one really seemed to know for sure. But Raven could count on all of these men, stationed at ringside, to jump into the ring during his "Raven's Rules" bouts where every rule was thrown out of the window. Raven actually claimed in an exclusive WCW/nWo Magazine interview in January: "I had an abusive childhood, abusive parents ... I never got any attention." Oh really, Mr. Silver Spoon? Much more would be learned about Raven later in the year.



JANUARY WAS JUMPIN'

The Outsiders, Scott Hall & Kevin Nash, defeated Rick & Scott Steiner for the WCW World Tag Team title on January 12th in Jacksonville. The Steiners rebounded by forming an excellent six-man team with Ray Traylor, defeating the nWo trio of Konnan, Buff Bagwell, & Scott Norton at Souled Out. However in the weeks that followed, Scott began acting very strangely during tag and six-man matches, usually showboating and hogging most of the action ... Lex Luger, with an assist from Sting, defeated Randy Savage at Souled Out ... Cracks began to appear in the nWo's unity ... Making a name for themselves at arena cards and television appearances were former World Class champion "Gentleman" Chris Adams, Super Calo, Marty Jannetty, and Barry Darsow, who later in the year began bringing golf equipment to the ring for a bizarre "hole-in-one challenge" ... Former AWA World champion Rick Martel began a quest for Booker T's Television Championship and got thrown through a glass door by Perry Saturn for his troubles ... Ernest "The Cat" Miller started compiling a hot winning streak ... Also hot was Mortis, who later on would unmask and reveal his true identity to be Kanyon ... Eric Bischoff was promoted to President of WCW on January 13th ... On January 26th, Monday Nitro was extended to three hours ... Rey Mysterio, Jr. and Curt Hennig underwent knee surgery ... Jim Neidhart and Davey Boy Smith competed well in singles and tag team action, but never truly re-formed The Hart Foundation with brother-in-law Bret Hart ... Chris Jericho continually took out his frustrations on David Penzer, even after promising it would never, EVER, happen again ... Legendary star Bobo Brazil died on January 20th. The remarkable athlete, considered by many to be the Jackie Robinson of the mat world, wrestled most of the sport's top stars during his five decades as an active competitor.

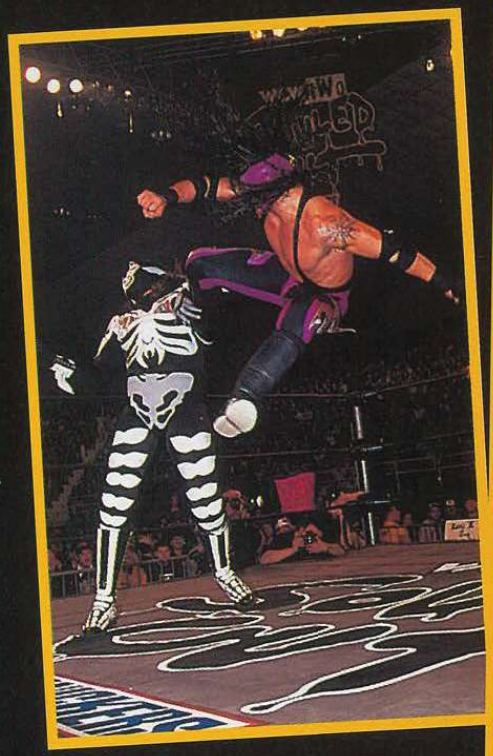


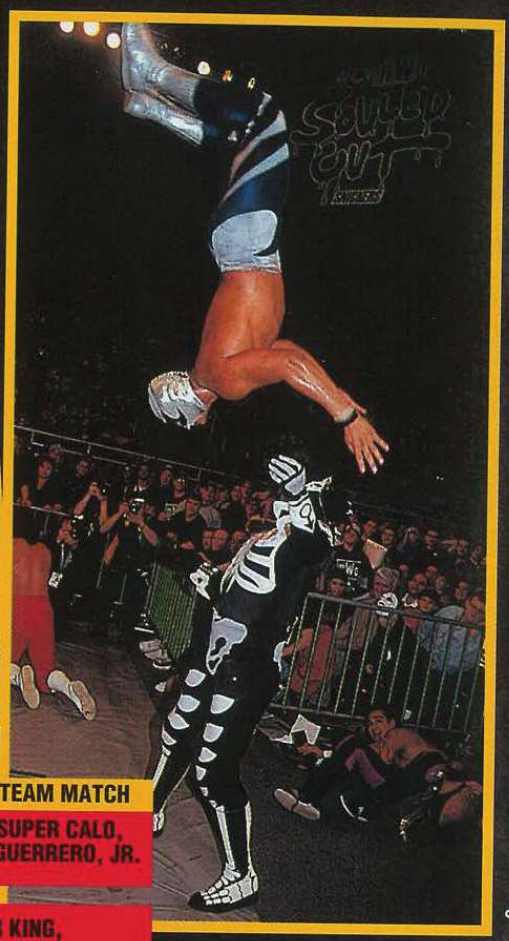
WCW nWo Souled Out

SNICKERS

January 24, 1998 - Dayton, OH

Due to the controversial ending of the Hogan/Sting match at Starrcade '97, the World title had been vacated and all of WCW and the millions of fans watching were anxious to find out how the belt situation would be resolved. Rowdy Roddy Piper had the task of making this arduous decision. After acknowledging that Hall was indeed, the rightful winner of World War 3 and did deserve a shot, Piper pointed out that there was no champ to wrestle, so Hall would have to wait. Sting and Hogan stood facing Piper, who signed a rematch at SuperBrawl between the two. Also during this Pay-Per-View, Bret Hart made his WCW wrestling debut against the "Nature Boy" Ric Flair, the TV and US titles were on the line, and the long awaited Scott Hall/Larry Zbyszko match ended with a surprising new nWo recruit.





8 MAN LUCHA LIBRE TAG TEAM MATCH

JUVENTUD GUERRERA, SUPER CALO, LIZMARK, JR., & CHAVO GUERRERO, JR.

beat

LA PARKA, SILVER KING, PSYCHOSIS, & EL DANDY

Fans of WCW's luchadors got what they wanted in an eight-man Mexican war! Chavo scored the pin for his team but after the bell, La Parka, WCW's "Chairman," blasted everyone but Psychosis with a metal folding chair! (9:29)

CHRIS BENOIT

beat

RAVEN

Benoit downed the then-Flock leader by submission, then the gang of thugs tried to crown the "Crippler" ... but were thwarted by Benoit's future Horseman partner, Dean Malenko. (10:36)

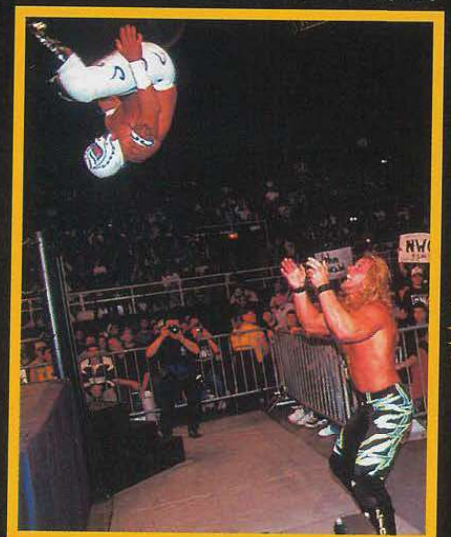
CRUISERWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

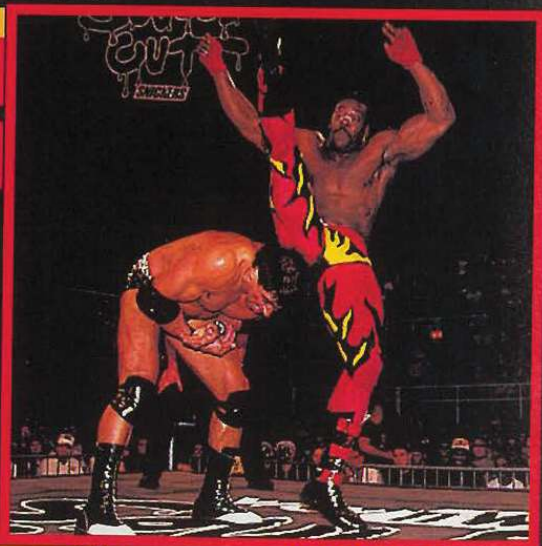
CHRIS JERICHO

beat

REY MYSTERIO, JR.

"LionHeart" captured the Cruiserweight title with the LionTamer, then brazenly beat the high-flying star with his own knee brace in a thriller! (8:23)





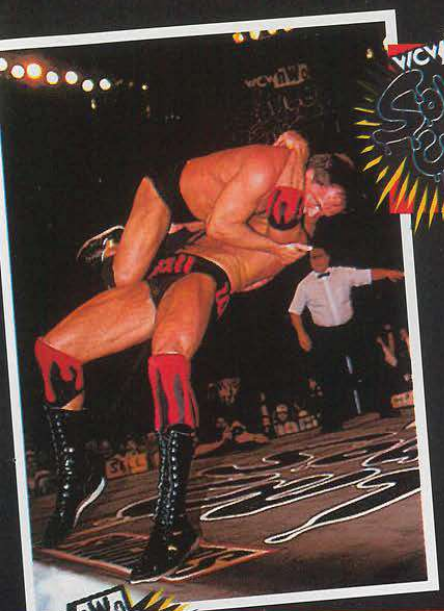
WORLD TV TITLE

BOOKER T

beat

RICK MARTEL

The former AWA World champion was thwarted by the mega-popular Booker T in a battle for the TV belt — and Saturn attacked Martel after the bell! (10:48)

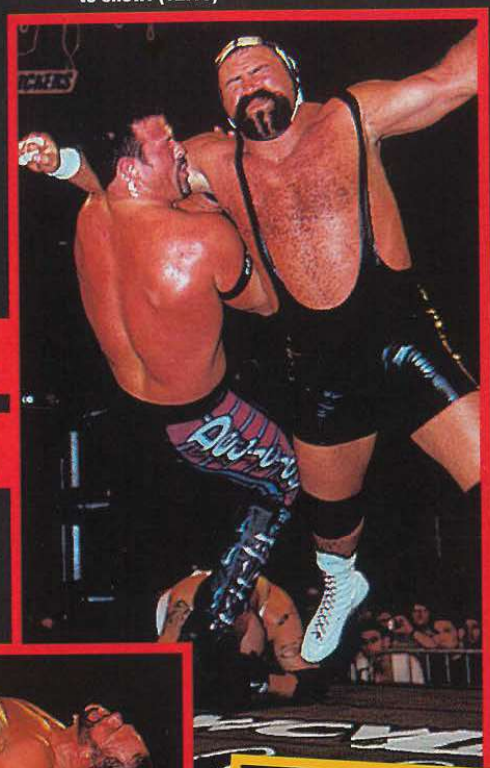


RAY TRAYLOR & RICK & SCOTT STEINER (TEAM WCW)

beat

BUFF BAGWELL, SCOTT NORTON & KONNAN (TEAM nWo)

A big WCW victory, but the first signs of strife between Rick and Scott were starting to show. (12:18)



LARRY ZBYSZKO w/ Dusty Rhodes

beat

SCOTT HALL w/ Louie Spicolli

This was the stunning match when the "American Dream" turned his back on tradition and joined the nWo! The "Legend" took the duke by DQ. (8:09)

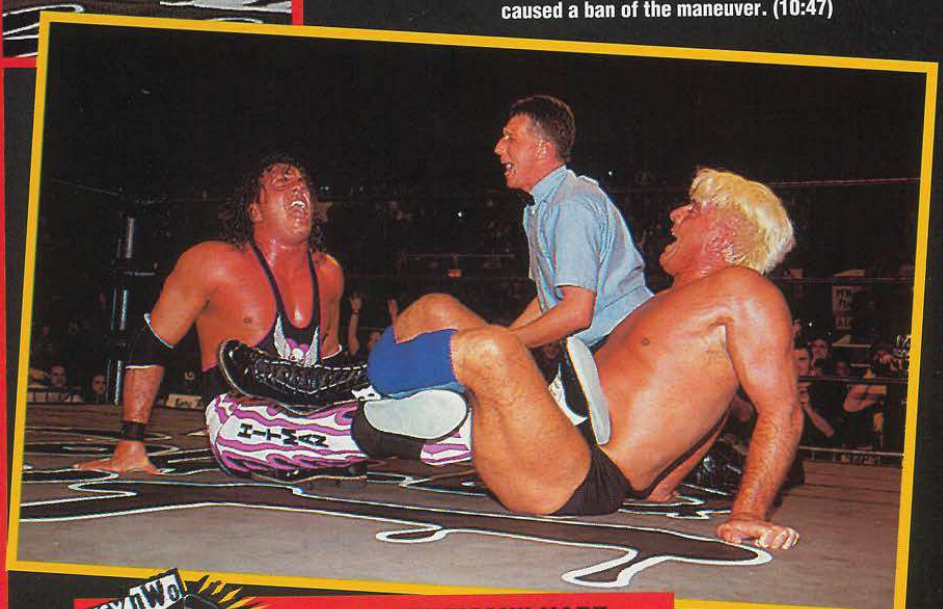
BATTLE OF THE GIANTS

KEVIN NASH

beat

GIANT

The power bomb heard 'round the world: "Big Sexy's" devastating Jackknife power bomb seriously injured Giant and soon caused a ban of the maneuver. (10:47)



LEX LUGER

beat

"MACHO MAN" RANDY SAVAGE

Another big WCW victory, as Luger beat Savage by submission — and Sting appeared to help hold the nWo at bay! (7:07)

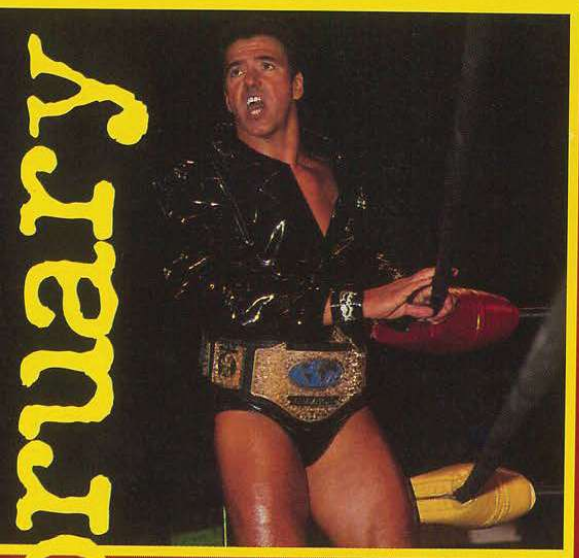
BRET "HITMAN" HART

beat

"NATURE BOY" RIC FLAIR

Was Hart really "the best there ever was?" The 13-time former World Champion "Nature Boy" took umbrage to that motto, but this scientific and classic victory via the Sharpshooter proved the "Hitman" to be a sportsman and legendary competitor ... or was he? (18:07)

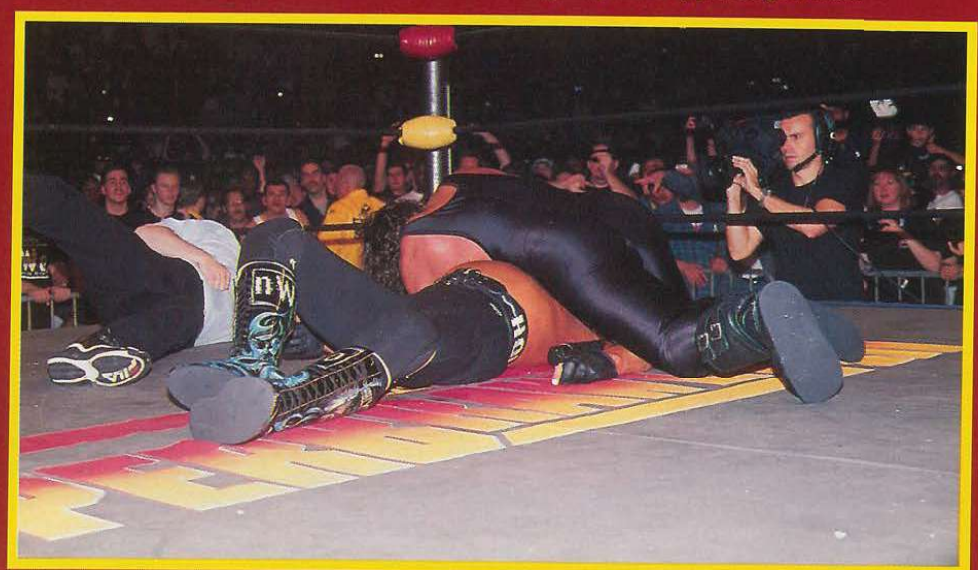
February



A SAVAGE SPLIT: For weeks, Hollywood Hogan and Randy Savage were at loggerheads, and during February, it meant the end of the "Macho Man's" nWo tenure for good. On Nitro, Hogan announced he would be there when Savage faced Sting in the main event, but Hogan's intentions were obviously not to help his former tag team partner. It looked as if Savage was about to defeat Sting after delivering his elbow drop from the top turnbuckle, but Hogan ran into the ring and stopped the count. Lex Luger got involved, brawls broke out ... but no one helped Savage, who obviously was inches away from complete estrangement from the nWo. Match by match, things got worse; the nWo even dropped a net from the top of the arena to deliver a beating to Sting, Savage, and Luger a week later. It was clear that if you crossed Hogan, your days left in the nWo would be few. When Luger beat Savage at SuperBrawl after Hogan stopped the nWo from aiding him, Hogan sneered, "I'm glad you got beat!" Savage gained revenge later.

A CLASS ACT'S FANTASTIC FINALE: Legendary former AWA World champion Rick Martel found the road in WCW a bit rough, yet still paved with glory as his career wound to a close. Martel, bearing a physique that made men 20 years his junior blush with envy, defeated Booker T for the WCW Television title on February 16th in Tampa. However, at SuperBrawl on February 22nd in San Francisco, Booker T regained the belt. During that match, the unfortunate Martel began a downward spiral from which he would not recover. He tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during that bout, which knocked him out of action for about four months. Ironically, it was Booker T's brother and former tag team partner Stevie Ray who knocked Martel out of action for good. During a match against the huge former Harlem Heat star in June, the Canadian star injured his neck, and decided to retire from WCW — at least for the time being. The world of pro wrestling surely misses Martel's in-ring performances; a man who delivered thrill after thrill for more than two decades and will go down in history as one of the classiest individuals as well. Martel isn't totally out of the wrestling loop though, as he now does French announcing for WCW's Canadian programming.

STING REGAINS THE TITLE: Sting regained the vacant World title, but it took some doing and some help from an unexpected source. No, it wasn't Nick Patrick, the former nWo official who (now back in the good graces of WCW) called the bout fairly, frustrating Hogan in the process. When Patrick was knocked out following a collision, the nWo stormed the ring, but Sting took them out one by one. During the melee, Savage ran into the ring and bashed Hogan with a can of spray paint! Patrick made the count, and, after the pinfall, sprayed "WCW" on Hogan's prone body just for good measure.



JUVI LOSES HIS MASK: Juventud Guerrera had lost the Cruiserweight title to Chris Jericho a month earlier, and Jericho, ever searching the rulebook for loopholes, made a stipulation if Juvi were to get a rematch at SuperBrawl: If Guerrera won, he got the title back, but if Jericho won, Juvi had to unmask! To a Mexican wrestler, losing your mask is almost as bad as losing your career, a mark of shame. It actually appeared that Juvi had regained the title, but the match was restarted when it was determined that "LionHeart" had grabbed the ropes as the three-count was made. Jericho then managed to snare Guerrera in his LionTamer, and Juvi had no recourse but to submit. Moments later, he told his beloved father he loved him, and slowly removed his mask — with a little help from Jericho. There truly was no reason for Juvi to be ashamed. The SuperBrawl match revealed not only a handsome young man, but also proved he could be ranked as one of the finest in the cruiserweight division.

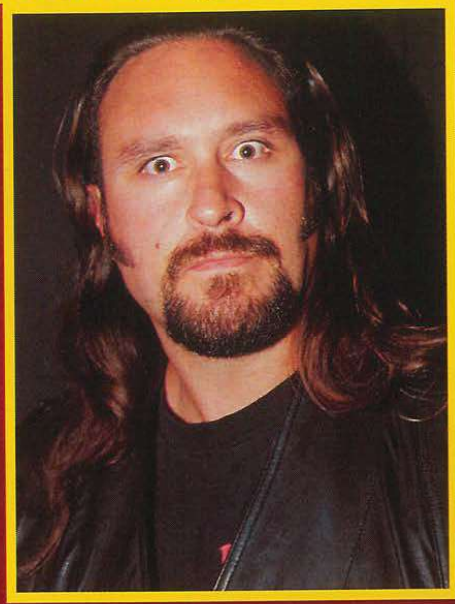
THE END OF THE STEINERS: Something had gone very wrong with Scott Steiner. During tag team bouts, particularly those against nWo opponents, Scott seemed content to hog practically all the action. He'd argue with Rick Steiner. He'd jaw with frequent partner Ray Traylor. Many times, he'd refuse to even speak with then-manager Ted DiBiase. However, the worst of it was his total refusal to make a tag. In a memorable February bout on Nitro, the Steiners defeated the rugged nWo team of Buff Bagwell and Kevin Nash, but Scott kept all the action to himself, confusing his brother and angering the fans. On February 9th in El Paso, The Steiners managed to upend the Outsiders when Rick pinned Scott Hall, but Scott Steiner was still unhappy, because he did not get to make the winning cover. What was Scott thinking? At SuperBrawl, his intentions became very clear. In a World Tag Team title rematch against the Outsiders, Scott viciously turned against his brother. He power bombed Rick and left DiBiase out cold with a KO punch. He then embraced Nash and Hall and handed

them the title belts. Scott Steiner, fan-favorite was gone, replaced by the blond egomaniac Big Poppa Pump!

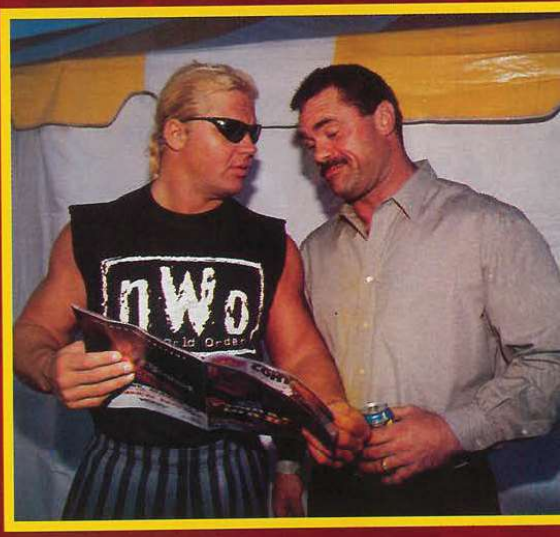
NEW TO THE nWo: As always, the nWo continued to seek new recruits. Coming out of nowhere was the Disciple, last seen in WCW as Booty Man, who aided a typical nWo attack following a Sting-Scott Hall match on Nitro. Hawaiian star Brian Adams entered the ring during an interview with Bret Hart, claiming to want to assist him in his fight against the nWo, but instead helped Hogan and crew during a vicious gang-up.

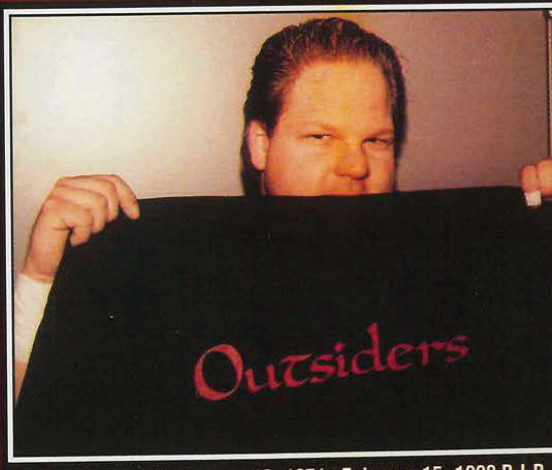
FEBRUARY FINDINGS

Dusty Rhodes often accompanied Scott Hall to the ring during his singles bouts, as did nWo wannabe Louis Spicolli. During a memorable Nitro bout, British star Chris Adams defeated Spicolli by disqualification when Spicolli blasted Adams with luggage — but that luggage had been stolen from Hall nemesis Larry Zbyszko ... Steve "Mongo"



McMichael enjoyed his hottest month ever in WCW, scoring big victories over Davey Boy Smith and Glacier ... Yuji Nagata, accompanied by Sonny Onoo, defeated Disco Inferno, and then gave the most incredible display of bad disco dancing since Elaine on *Seinfeld* ... The Goldberg juggernaut rumbled on. Still undefeated, he scored a SuperBrawl win over Brad Armstrong and recorded a remarkably easy pinfall over world class British superstar Steven Regal ... "Macho Man" Randy Savage was named Harvard Lampoon's Man of the Year ... The Flock caused anarchy in every bout in which any member appeared. Lodi's sign carrying and cheerleading became totally insufferable ... Wrestling lost one of it's brightest young stars when Louie Spicolli, 27, was found dead at his home in L.A. on February 15th ... Kevin Nash kept on delivering power bombs, and kept on getting handcuffed by WCW security and several police forces. Reportedly, Hogan kept on paying the fines ... Curt Hennig, back from injury, started a long winning streak — but this time, was constantly accompanied by lifetime friend Rick Rude ... The feud between Raven and Chris Benoit continued, but there also seemed to be some tension brewing between the "Crippler" and Diamond Dallas Page, who aided Benoit in matches against The Flock's leader ... Vicious & Delicious, Buff Bagwell and Scott Norton, might have been top contenders for the tag title, had the Outsiders not kept a firm hold on the belts ... former tag team partners Meng and the Barbarian continued to feud.



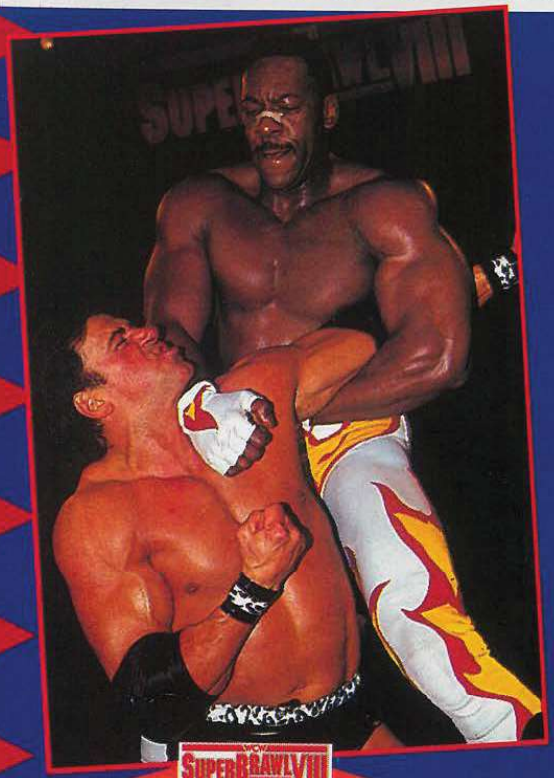


Louie Spicolli: January 10, 1971 - February 15, 1998 R.I.P.

WCW SUPERBRAWL VIII

February 22, 1998
San Francisco, CA

The lineup itself spoke volumes for this year's SuperBrawl. With every title on the line (and the TV title on the line twice!), the show promised to be unprecedented with several spectacular matches scheduled. Add to that a new, surprise nWo recruit when one brother betrayed another, and the crowning of a new WCW World Heavyweight Champion and it was an amazing event from start to finish.

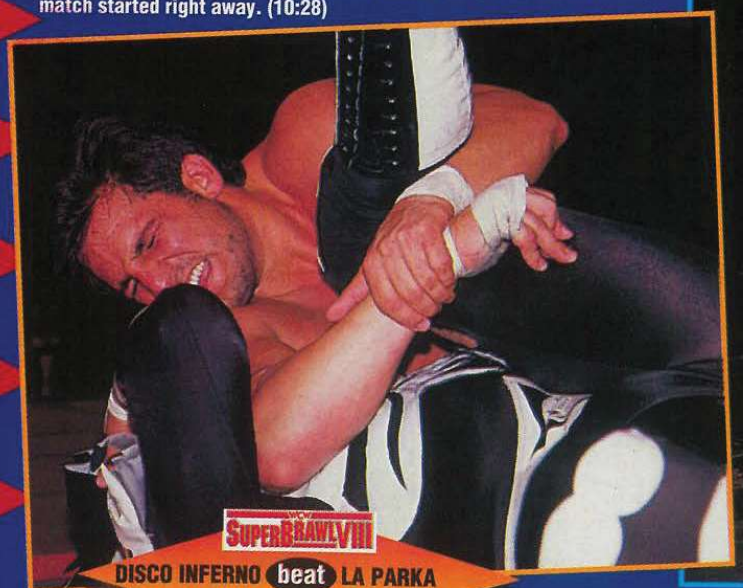


SUPERBRAWL VIII
BOOKER T beat RICK MARTEL
(WINNER WRESTLES SATURN LATER IN THE SHOW FOR THE BELT)

Booker T regained the TV title from the game Canadian superstar, but after the bout, he was attacked by Perry Saturn — who was promised a match against the winner later in the card anyway. The second match started right away. (10:28)

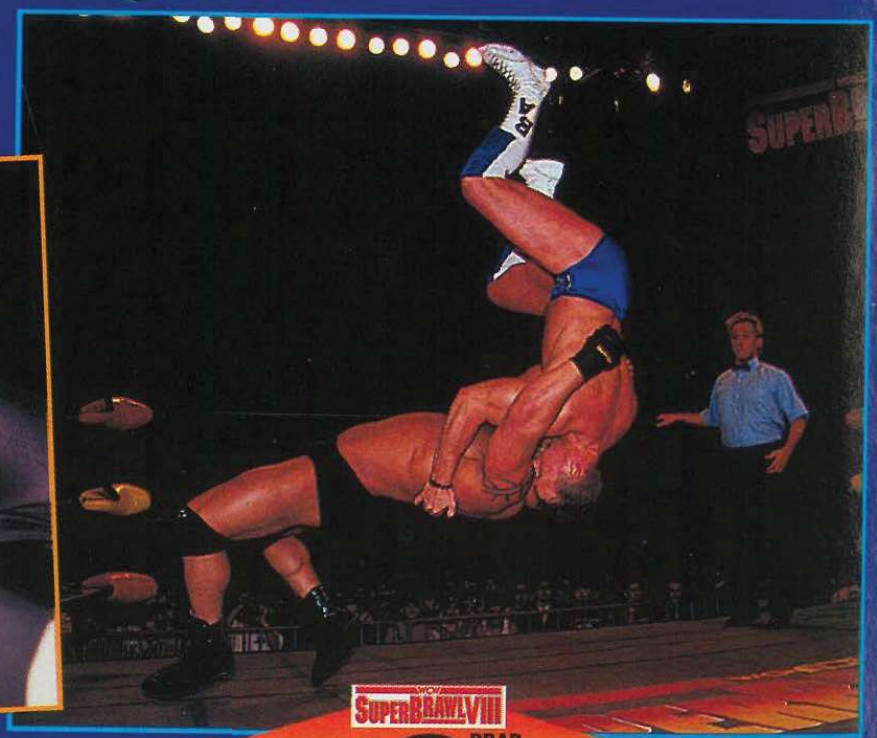
SUPERBRAWL VIII
BOOKER T beat SATURN
TV CHAMPIONSHIP

Saturn went after Booker T with venom, but the new champ scored another victory with his second Harlem Sidekick of the evening. (14:20)



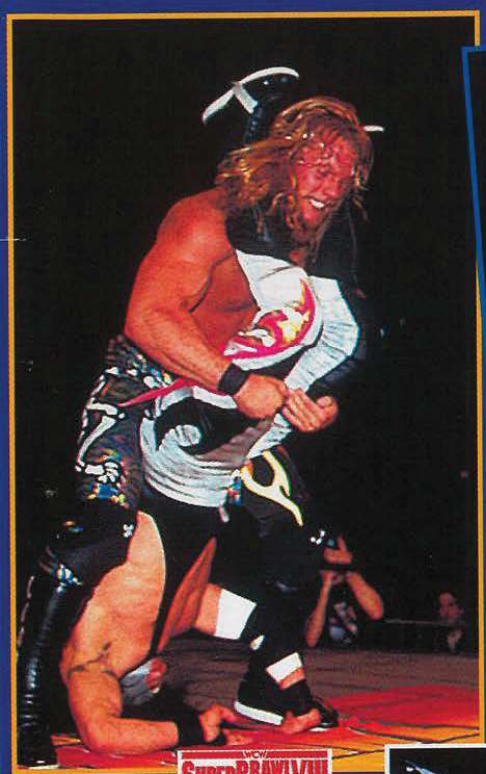
SUPERBRAWL VIII
DISCO INFERNO beat LA PARKA

WCW's "Chairman" gave it everything he had — including a few well-placed shots with a steel chair, of course — but Disco's Chartbuster scored him one of the biggest victories of his career. (11:50)



SUPERBRAWL VIII
GOLDBERG beat BRAD ARMSTRONG

The handsome second-generation star had his hands full with this hungry rookie, and one Jackhammer later, it was clear that big Bill was a superstar in the making! (2:16)

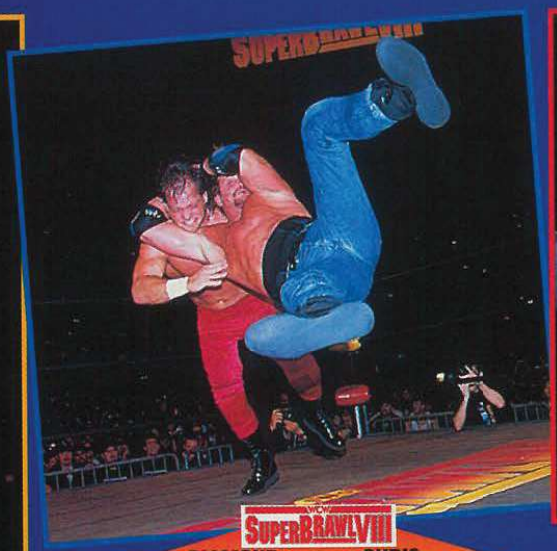


SUPERBRAWL VIII

CHRIS JERICHO beat JUVENTUD GUERRERA

MASK vs. CRUISERWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

This was the stunning match where Juvi was forced to unmask. Feel no shame, Mr. Guerrera: You wrestled like a champion in this classic Cruiserweight title encounter! (13:26)

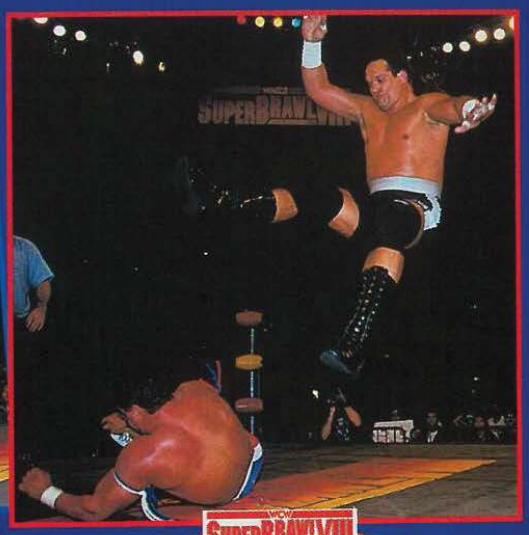


SUPERBRAWL VIII

DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE beat CHRIS BENOIT

SPECIAL RETURN MATCH
U.S. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

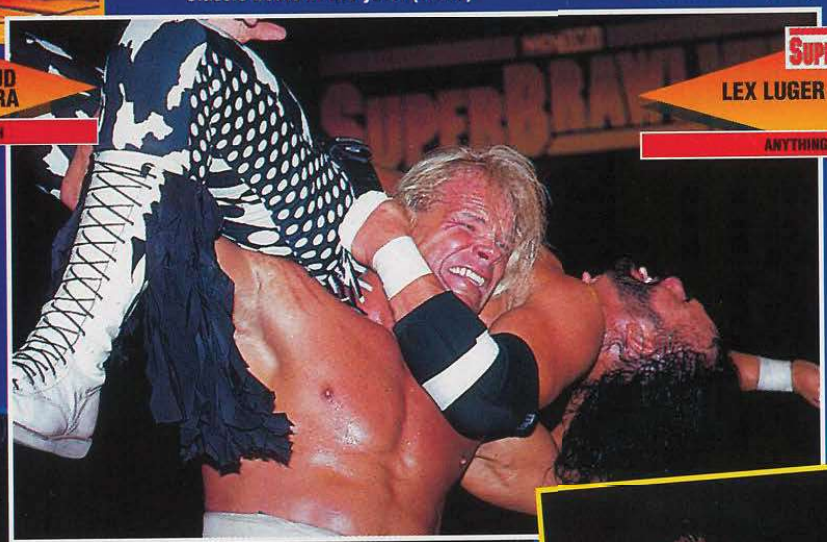
No hatred, no bitter rivalry — just pure action as Page defended the U.S. title in one of the classic bouts of the year. (15:46)



SUPERBRAWL VIII

THE BRITISH BULLDOG beat STEVE "MONGO" McMICHAEL

Davey Boy Smith won via submission with the Bulldog armbar, but "Mongo" screamed "I didn't quit!" as he stormed off. (5:16)

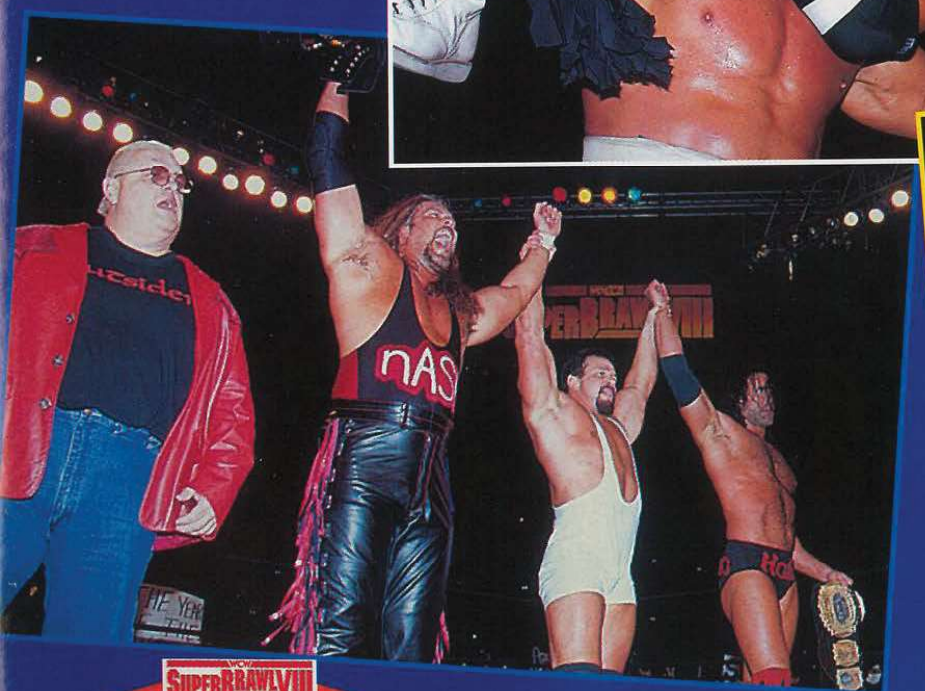


SUPERBRAWL VIII

LEX LUGER beat "MACHO MAN" RANDY SAVAGE

ANYTHING GOES, NO DQ MATCH

Luger and Savage both held the nWo off during this no-DQ encounter, won by Luger with the Torture Rack as Hollywood Hogan refused to allow the nWo to help the "Macho Man." "I'm glad you got beat!" Hogan boasted to Savage after the bout. (7:50)

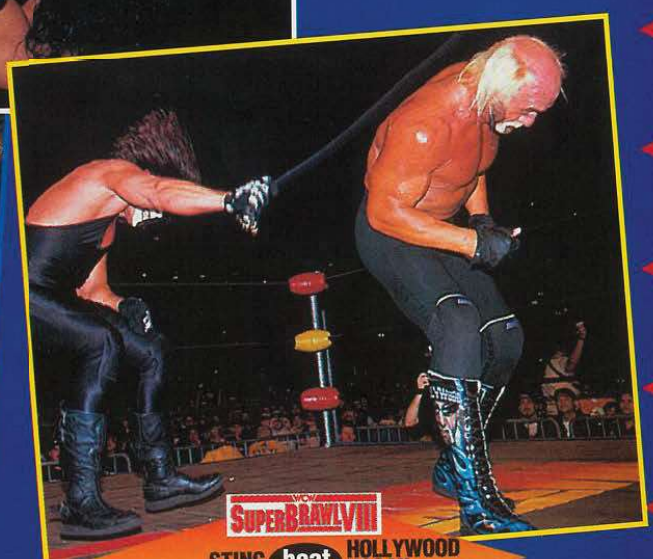


SUPERBRAWL VIII

THE OUTSIDERS beat THE STEINERS

TAG TEAM TITLE MATCH

This was the bout where not only the Steiners lost the World Tag Team title, but Scott turned against Rick as well. (4:16)

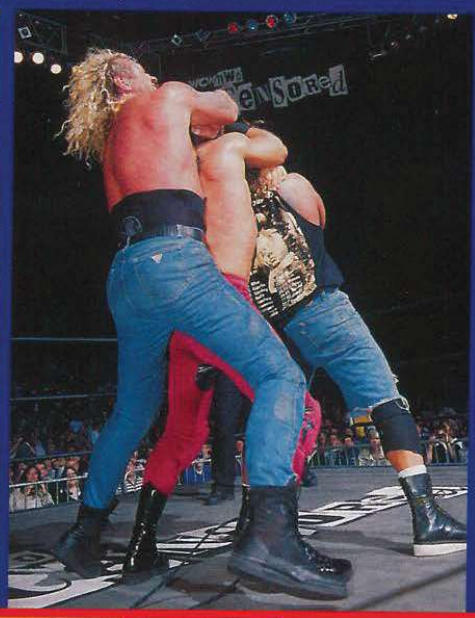


SUPERBRAWL VIII

STING beat HOLLYWOOD HOGAN

WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

The World title was vacant when this match began, but the "Stinger" scored one of his biggest victories ever — then painted "WCW" on Hogan's chest after the bout. Sting became the people's World Heavyweight Champion! (16:30)



March

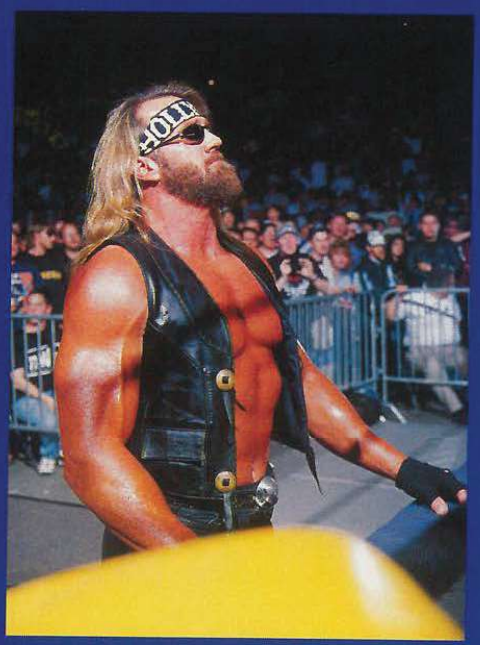
Black & White? It certainly appeared that way when the suddenly bickering Hollywood Hogan and Kevin Nash could no longer see eye to eye. During an important match pitting "Macho Man" Randy Savage versus an angry Rowdy Roddy Piper on the March 23rd Nitro, a very tight bout ended with a mass attack by the nWo — but this one was different. Both Nash and Hogan stormed toward the ring, but they were not united: Hogan lusted for Savage's skin, but Nash protected the "Macho Man." During the ensuing argument, Hogan threw a punch at Nash. "Big Sexy" seemed well on his way to being every bit as ostracized in Hogan's nWo eyes as Savage had now become.

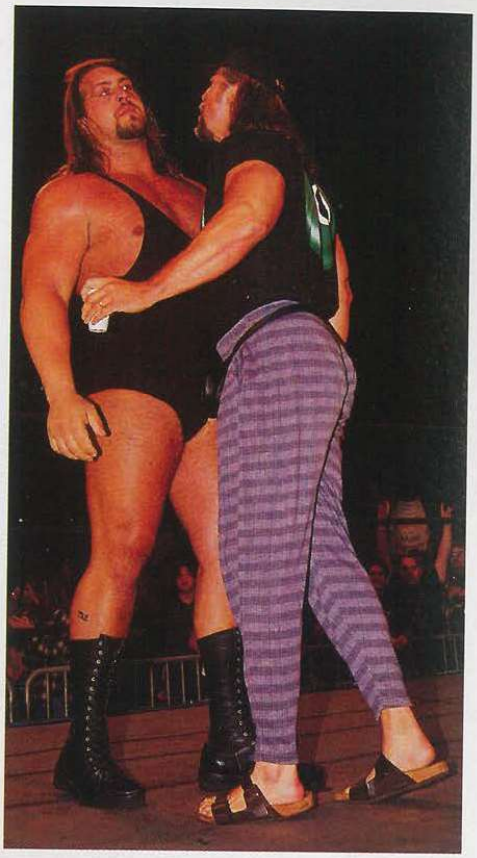
DANGEROUS DISCIPLE: In March, Hogan's old/new best buddy, the Disciple, was making every match a living hell for WCW's biggest stars. The March 9th Nitro featured a highly anticipated main event as Hogan, Hall, and Nash teamed up to take on Giant, Sting, and Randy Savage. The end result was tainted with outside interference as it was Disciple's neckbreaker variation that meant Savage would suffer the pinfall loss. Not only did WCW have the nWo to contend with, but the Disciple as well.

DDP'S TRIPLE JEOPARDY: Perhaps more than any other month in the career of Diamond Dallas Page, March 1998 proved this immensely popular star is worthy of the fan adulation he receives. Firmly entrenched as U.S. Champion, Page took on every stern challenge to come his way during the month, and yelled for more when each threat was dispatched. The first person to get under Page's skin during the month was Raven. Rife with jealousy when the Stuck Mojo video featuring Page and The Flock was shown on MTV, Raven attacked Page during a guest appearance on *MTV Live*. Enraged, Page vowed to get more than even, but who thought that Horseman Chris Benoit would get involved? During an attack on Page by Raven on Nitro, Benoit ran to the ring, probably to aid Dallas, but in the heat of the battle, it became every man for himself. In rode the WCW Championship Committee to the rescue. They sanctioned a "Triple Jeopardy Match" pitting Page versus Raven versus Benoit at WCW Uncensored on March 15th in Mobile. It would be one of several truly great matches Page competed in during this month, as he once again, somehow, some way, was able to score one of the hardest-fought victories of his career.

THE COUNT BEGINS: When the historians look back on 1998, it's a safe bet that this will be the month when Goldberg changed from "prospective" to "true" championship contender. WCW announcers started tracking the huge former NFL star's undefeated streak by the numbers. During Nitro he demolished Sick Boy. Next in line was a game Barry Darsow. On March 23rd and 30th, victories over former TV Champion Renegade and the always dangerous Ray Traylor followed. It was 58 and counting. Experts predicted he had to lose sometime soon, although there was a shortage of wrestlers willing to face him. Foes who had avoided him were forced to face him. However, politics, numbers, and all the sudden fan adulation meant little to this incredible and determined athlete. His battle cry would soon become known the world over: "Who's next?"

AN nWo NASH NO-NO: Trouble brewing in the

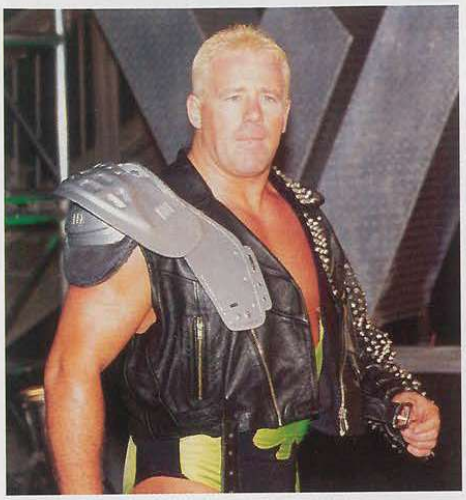




entire nWo, broke out of the handcuffs and chased after Kevin Nash! Fans had wondered why Nash failed to show up for several bouts, but it wasn't hard to figure. Giant was melting down members of the nWo one by one. So when Giant was being led off, a laughing Nash, figuring he was safe, taunted the 7'4" superstar and hurled a beverage in his face. Nash was lucky to escape from the arena with his limbs intact.

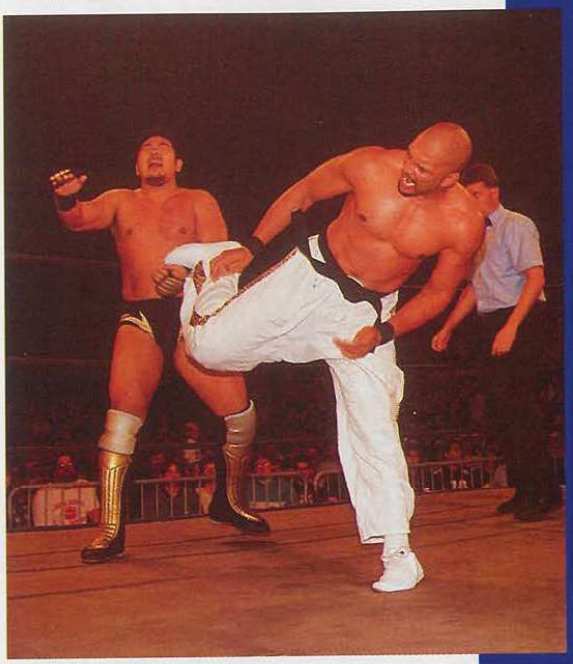
MARCH MUSINGS

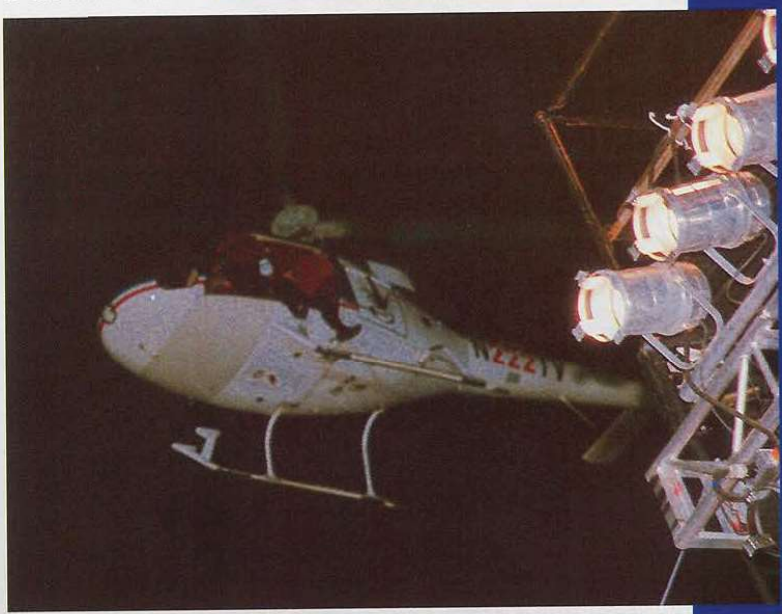
The spectacular Uncensored card featured TV Champion Booker T in one of his finest championship moments as he scored a win over the tough Eddy Guerrero, Juventud Guerrera, feeling better about being maskless with each passing bout, copped an upset over K-Dogg, Cruiserweight Champion Chris Jericho downed Dean Malenko, who then announced his retirement, and Lex Luger beat a suddenly blond Scott Steiner, whose new image wasn't immediately more fun ... Dave "Fit" Finlay

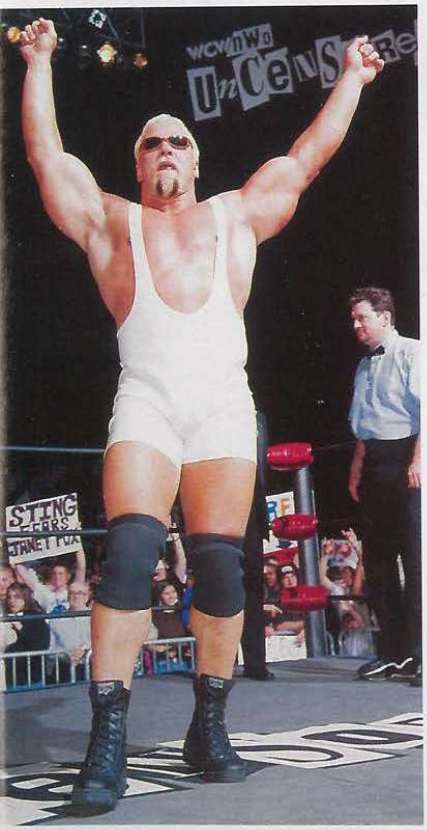


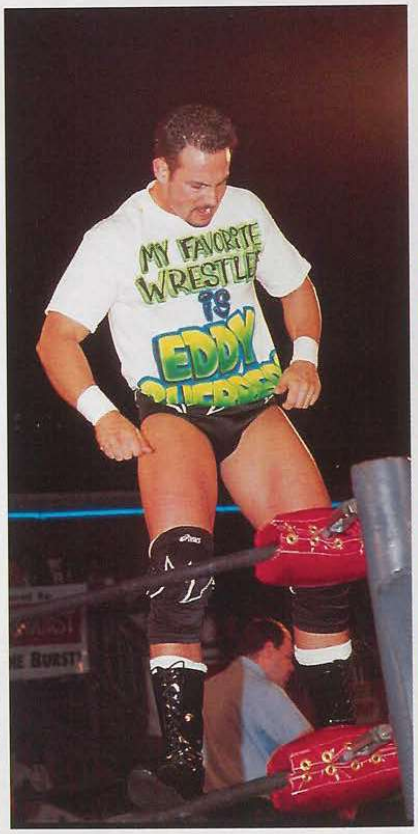
also turned blond ... Sting gave his first televised interview since donning the black & white guise on March 2nd ... Scott Steiner was calling himself 'White Thunder' and started hanging out with that other nWo body beautiful, Buff Bagwell, on a regular basis ... Glacier's record wasn't always cold, as he scored some serious wins with an aggressive new attitude. The same could be said for "The Cat,"

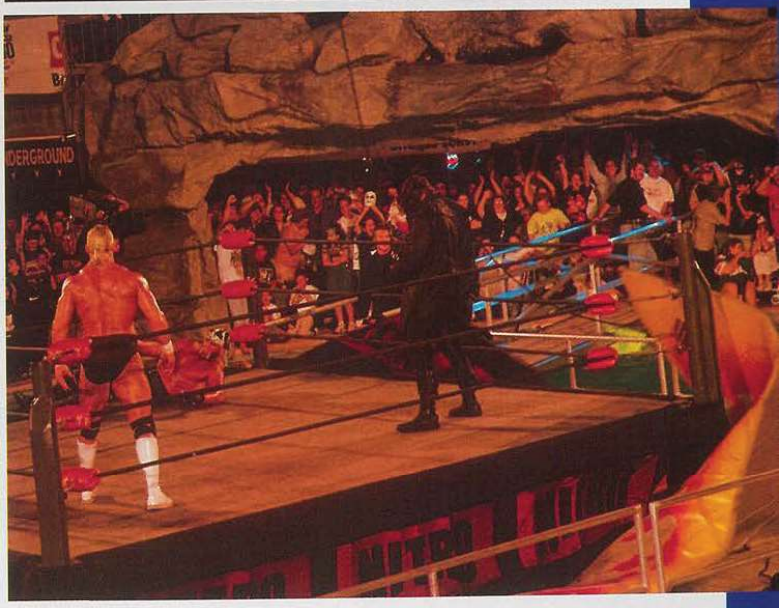
Ernest Miller ... Rey Mysterio, Jr. began rehabbing his knee ... Sting made his most spectacular entrance when he repelled out of a helicopter during Nitro from Panama City ... Syxx vanished from the Wolfpac ... Steve McMichael broke his wrist ... It surely ranked as a huge month for the nWo. Their gang-up against Rick Steiner on Nitro was as vicious as anything seen by the group previously ... Bret Hart continually kept coming to the aid of Ric Flair, and we all believed his intentions were good ... TNT Europe began broadcasting Nitro in it's entirety every Friday night ... Eddy Guerrero beat Chavo on March 12th to gain control over his nephew's actions ... Chris Jericho proclaimed himself the "Man of 1004 Holds" and produced a computer printout of every one of them ... Lodi broke his ankle during a match against Psychosis.







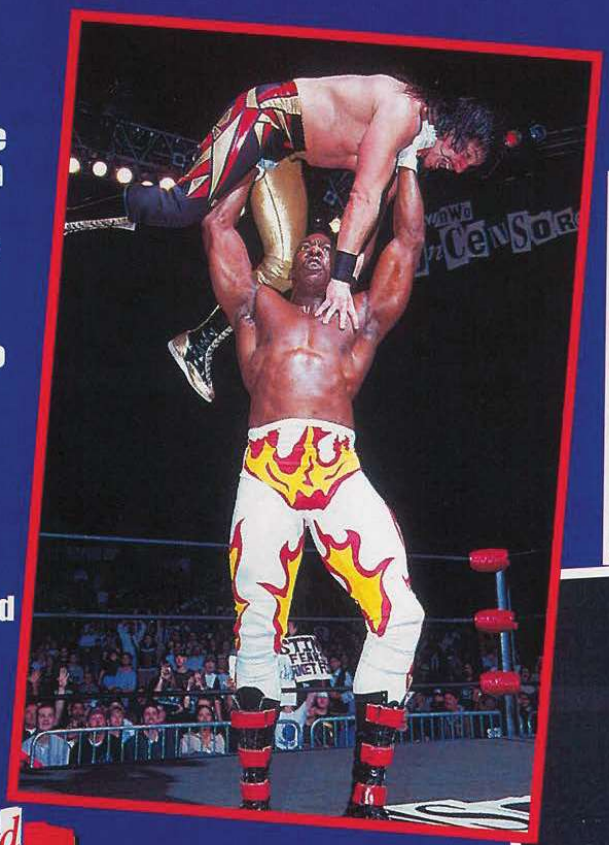




March 15, 1998 - Mobile, AL

WCW UnCensored

This year's UnCensored had some truly unique matches, notably, for the first time ever in WCW, a Triple Jeopardy match between Diamond Dallas Page, Raven, and Chris Benoit and a hellacious cage match between two nWo adversaries, Hollywood Hogan and "Macho Man" Randy Savage. There were betrayals and run-ins, a Rude Awakening and four titles on the line. And Dean Malenko left us all confused with one little word: "Home."



UnCensored

JUVENTUD GUERRERA beat KONNAN

Konnan felt that Juvi was a disgrace to the Hispanic people for losing his mask to Chris Jericho. It was Juvi's "never surrender" attitude that helped him overcome the weight disadvantage and win the match with a roll-up for the 3-count. (10:25)

UnCensored

BOOKER T beat EDDY GUERRERO w/ Chavo Guerrero, Jr.

TV TITLE MATCH

Booker T walked in and out with the TV title as Eddy Guerrero pleaded with his nephew for help. Despite the fact that Chavo was now Eddy's "slave," Chavo refused to help Eddy and, consequently, Booker T was once again victorious. (11:07)

The Cruiserweight title was on the line once again, and Jericho held onto the belt by forcing Malenko to submit to his LionTamer. (14:41)

UnCensored

CHRIS JERICHO beat DEAN MALENKO

CRUISERWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

Rick Steiner ran out during the match, distracting Scott and allowing Luger to slam Scott with a vicious forearm for a pinfall victory. Scott Norton attacked Rick Steiner after the match, but it would be Rick who got the final revenge on his brother by executing a back bodydrop on him. (3:54)

UnCensored

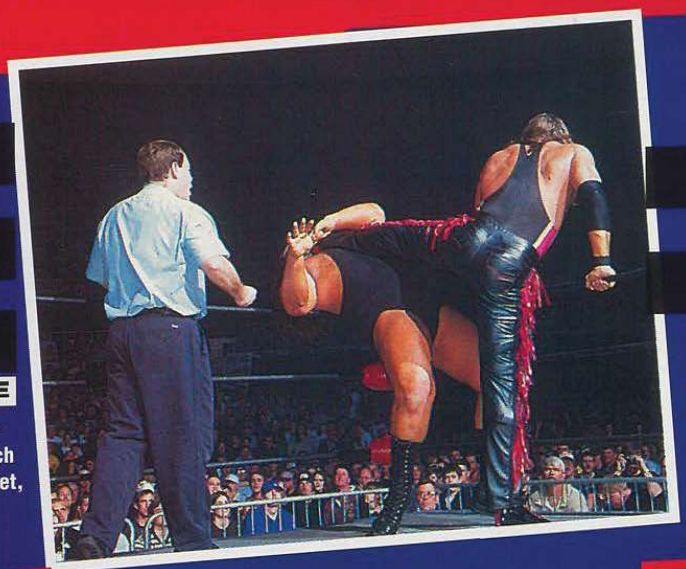
LEX LUGER beat SCOTT STEINER

WCW UnCensored

DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE
beat
RAVEN
&
CHRIS BENOIT

TRIPLE JEOPARDY MATCH - U.S. TITLE

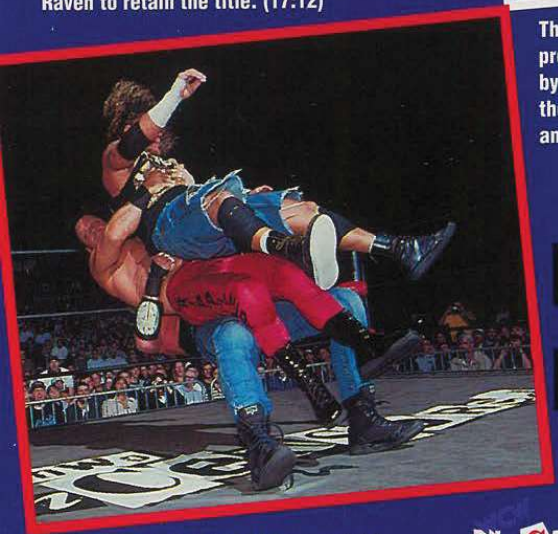
The U.S. Heavyweight Championship was on the line as this no holds barred triple jeopardy match awed the crowd. The three fought all over the set, destroying everything in their path until DDP delivered a Diamond Cutter through a table to Raven to retain the title. (17:12)



WCW UnCensored

BRET "HITMAN" HART
beat
CURT HENNIG w/Rick Rude

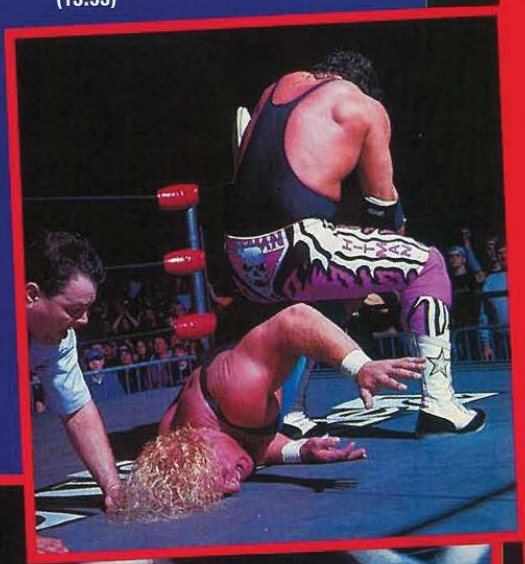
This technical match-up was interrupted time after time by the menacing Rude's outside interference. Hart, however, was able to slap the Sharpshooter onto Hennig for the submission win before being attacked by both Hennig and Rude. (13:53)



The battle of the giants ended when Giant set Nash up for the previously banned Jackknife power bomb but was thwarted by Brian Adams, who slammed Giant with a baseball bat for the disqualification win. Giant fought off Vincent, Konnan, and Adams after the match. (6:36)

WCW UnCensored

GIANT
beat
KEVIN NASH

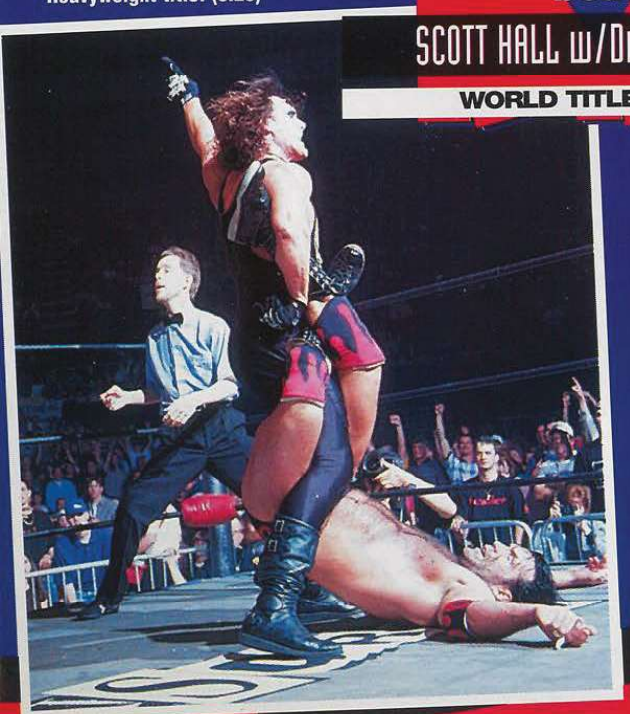


Sting defended his World Heavyweight title against Hall and the menacing Rhodes. A Scorpion Deathdrop won the match for the champ to retain the World Heavyweight title. (8:26)

WCW UnCensored

STING
beat
SCOTT HALL w/Dusty Rhodes

WORLD TITLE MATCH

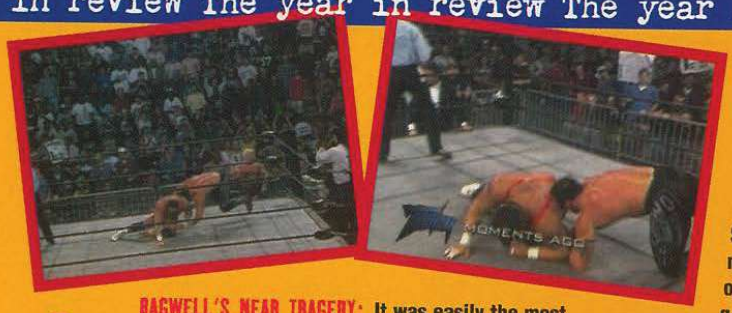


WCW UnCensored

"MACHO MAN" RANDY SAVAGE w/Elizabeth
no contest
HOLLYWOOD HOGAN

CAGE MATCH

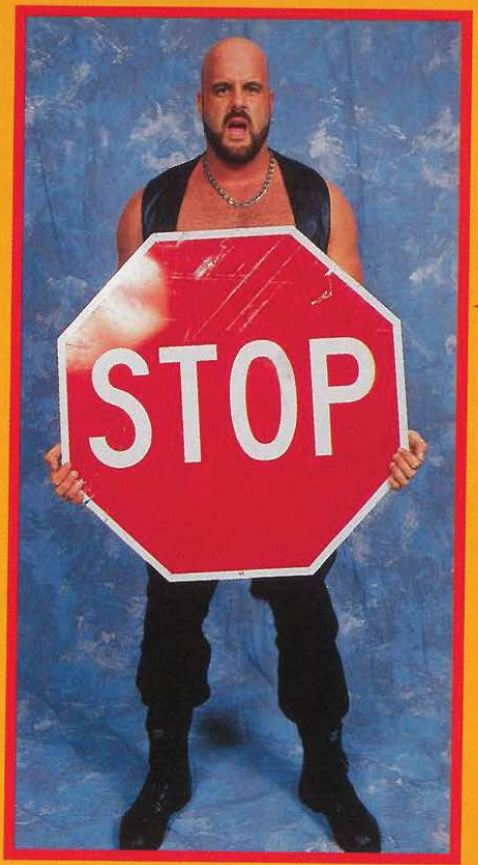
This match took place in a cage to keep outside interference firmly outside the ring. However, it was not anticipated that Sting would drop from the rafters into the cage to help Savage fight off Hogan. Savage turned on Sting as the match ended in a No Contest. (16:23)

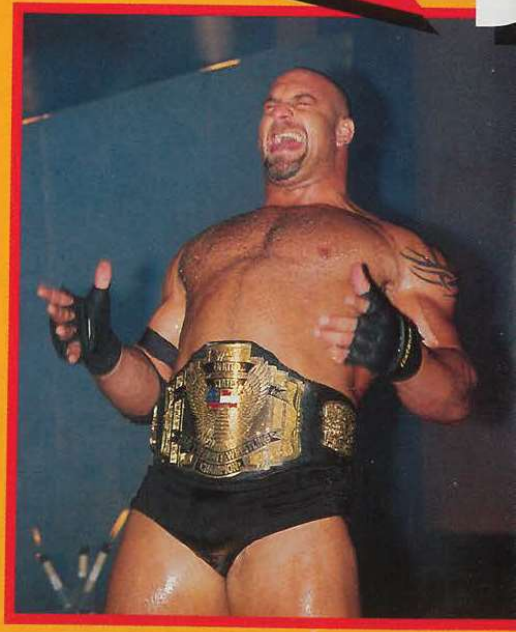


APRIL

Hogan. Nash power bombed Sting, and pulled an unconscious Savage over the popular star's prone form. Hogan was shocked that Nash would betray him so blatantly, but that was only the first of the tricks that "Big Sexy" had up his sleeve. All hail the new champion, the "Macho Man" ... for one day, anyway. Hogan recaptured the gold on Nitro the next evening, as shocking interference by Bret Hart directly caused the victory. When Roddy Piper entered the ring to find out why Bret would do such a thing, he found himself decked by the "Hitman" as well. Again, the question had to be asked: Why, Bret, why?

BAGWELL'S NEAR TRAGEDY: It was easily the most frightening moment of 1998. On the April 22nd broadcast of Thunder, Marcus Alexander Bagwell, aka Buff, had awkwardly slipped out of a flying bulldog headlock, striking his head against Rick Steiner's back. It looked like a case of whiplash, but it turned out to be much worse. Bagwell lay on the canvas, not moving, at the end of the bout and through a commercial break. Paramedics swarmed the ring, gingerly using a backboard to remove the paralyzed Bagwell. Regardless of fan loyalty, collectively, a prayer was said around the world. "Within milliseconds, it was very obvious that I was paralyzed," Bagwell said in Issue 41. "I could not move anything." Bagwell was rushed to the hospital, where it was revealed that a cervical disc between the C3 and C4 vertebrae was penetrating into his spine. Surgery was performed not only on that area, but also to relieve the pain from other damaged vertebrae. Blood clots were also removed to end breathing difficulties. Thankfully, Bagwell made a remarkable recovery. Not so thankfully, were the callous actions Buff engaged in during the months that passed after his injury that turned many fans against him for life.

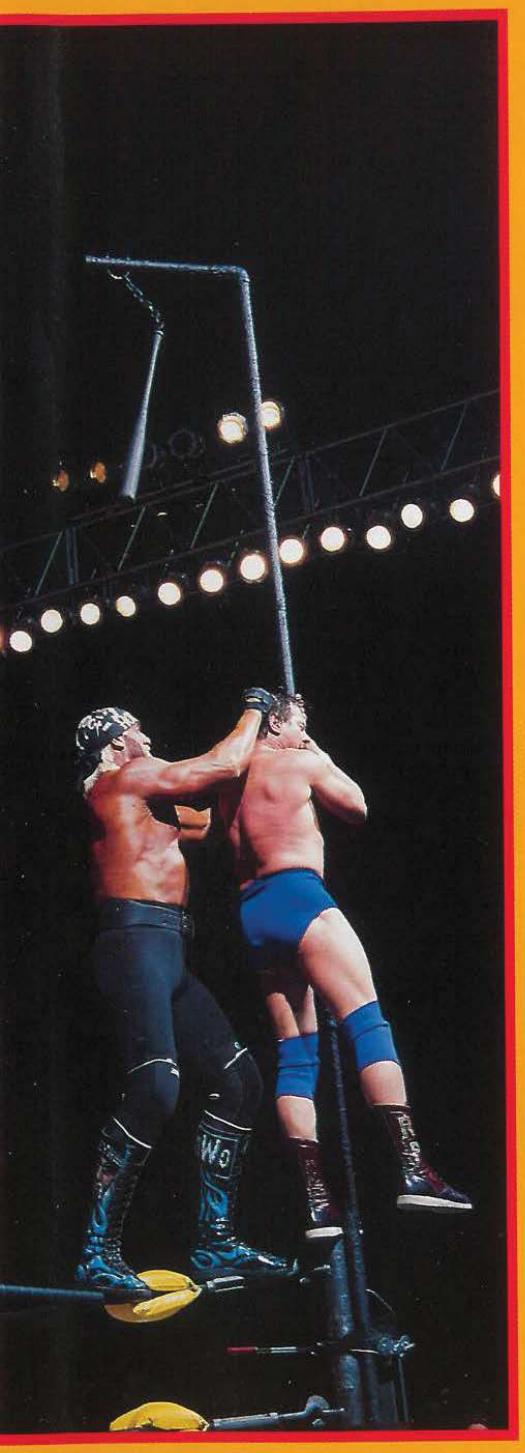




SAVAGE, HOGAN WIN THE TITLE: It was clearly a rough period in the life of Randy Savage. He was hit by a Dodge Viper (can you guess who was driving it?) just a couple of weeks before his World title match against Sting at Spring Stampede, so he clearly was nowhere near 100 percent for his most important match of the year. Regardless, he fought like a demon, determined to regain the World title despite his sudden, forced nWo departure. During the course of this wild bout that saw outside interference from Miss Elizabeth, Hollywood Hogan, and Kevin Nash, it appeared that Savage could pin Sting, but was prevented from doing so by ("that's MY belt!")

HORACE'S HEINOUS DEBUT: The ever-frustrating oddball Raven shocked the sport by winning the U.S. title from DDP at Spring Stampede, but the victory was tainted by a stop-sign wielding Horace, new to The Flock. It would be soon after, that "Professor" Mike Tenay would reveal this man as Horace Hogan, nephew of Hollywood Hogan and a wrestler who had already been a major star in Japan and around the globe. At that point, the big man seemed content to do Raven's bidding, usually using his stop sign to batter opponents. Raven's odd hold on his stable of young stars continued, but his championship would prove to be a fleeting moment of glory.

GOLDBERG'S FIRST GOLD: Just one day after Raven's shocking upset over Page, Goldberg was granted his first-ever title shot and Raven would be the first obstacle on his road to gold and glory on Nitro from Colorado Springs. Goldberg had earned the title shot by defeating Saturn at the action-packed Spring Stampede Pay-Per-View spectacular. Fans were nearly out of their minds with glee, as millions figured that Goldberg could not be stopped — and they were right. Goldberg, despite the rough early going from the always-cunning Raven, shook off any doubters by crushing The Flock leader for his first taste of championship gold. Goldberg's WCW debut was in September, 1997, and just six months later, on April 20th, he had captured one of the most prestigious titles in the sport's history. Goldberg simply kept doing what he did best: Storming the ring, intimidating opponents, and dominating in a way few wrestlers have ever done.

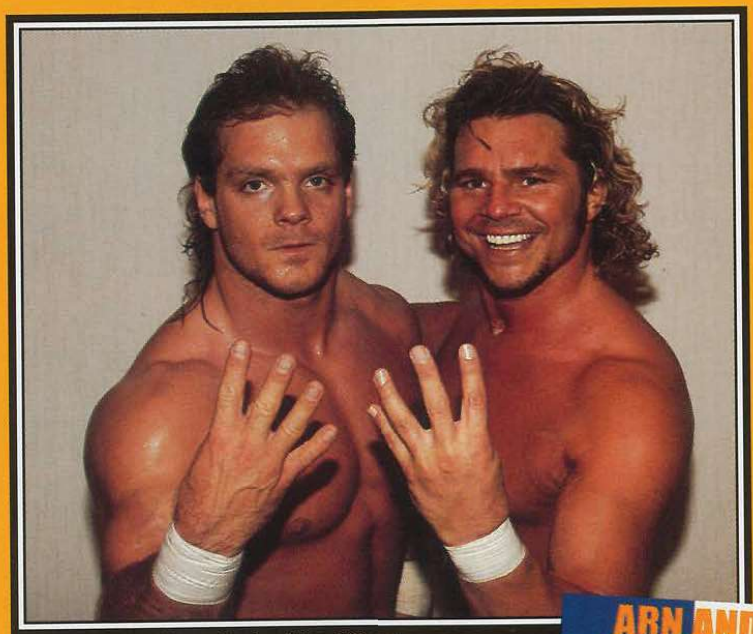


CLASSIC ... JUST CLASSIC: We could fill pages recounting the details of the tons of small rifts that formed between Chris Benoit and Booker T during the course of 1998. The matches between these two incredible athletes for the TV title were simply breathtaking. They competed at Spring Stampede, on Nitros, on Thunders, and anywhere in between. Time after time, match after match, their true greatness showed. These were thrilling, evenly contested bouts between two hungry athletes who respected each other, but who showed too much pride to back down. Benoit was unable to wrest the TV title from Booker T at Spring Stampede, but it didn't really matter which man wore the gold in this feud. Both emerged as true winners in every contest, showing the mat world what real champions were all about.

APRIL SHOWERS

Stars from virtually every federation gathered for a benefit for the family of the late Brian Pillman. Reportedly, more than $23,000 was raised during a card that featured many top WCW stars, including his former Horseman partner, Chris Benoit ... An alliance of old friends turned out to be deadly. Interference by Rick Rude during Curt Hennig's matches all but assured victories for the Minnesotan, including an important one over The

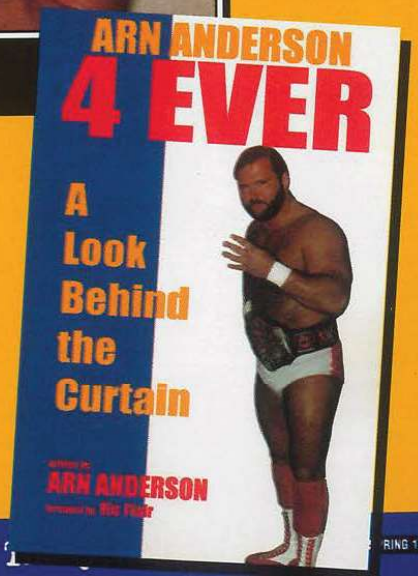
one of their dance routines ... A big month for many of the luchadors, including El Dandy, Psychosis, and WCW's "Chairman," La Parka ... Legendary mat star Larry "The Ax" Hennig was at the April 13th Nitro to cheer on his son, Curt ... Raven was attacked by a "fan" during the April 9th episode of Thunder ... Jimmy Hart's team of Hugh Morrus and Barbarian scored a big victory over the slumping Public Enemy ... Goldberg's undefeated streak hit 60-0 ... Legal proceedings were filed against Ric Flair for breach of contract after he missed a few shows and the battle between Flair and Bischoff began.



Remembering Brian Pillman
May 22, 1961 - October 5, 1997

WOLFPAC ON THE HORIZON: The record books show that Kevin Nash and Hollywood Hogan defeated Giant and Roddy Piper in a bat match at Spring Stampede, but the two huge nWo members spent most of the month sniping and sneak-attacking each other. Shockingly, the two formed a cohesive unit for much of this bout, but at the end, Hogan smashed Nash with an aluminum baseball bat. It was clear that Nash, at this point in time, felt he was the true driving force of the nWo, while Hogan believed the entire wrestling world revolved around his broad shoulders.

British Bulldog at Spring Stampede ... In a major shock, Bret Hart declared his admiration for Hollywood Hogan ... An odd rift formed between "Uncle" Eddy Guerrero and the wacky Chavo Guerrero, Jr. Eddy wanted Chavo to become more aggressive, as Eddy had done just months earlier. Chavo was proud to use scientific holds and maneuvers, but tried just about anything in order to please Eddy. Their relationship was getting weirder by the week ... Arn Anderson announced the release of his autobiography *A Look Behind the Curtain* ... Alex Wright returned to television for the first time since November and joined The Nitro Girls during



SPRING STAMPEDE

WCW/nWo

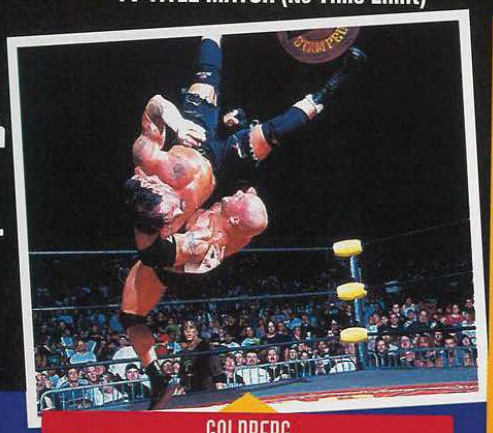
April 19, 1998 - Denver, CO

This year's Spring Stampede was filled with no holds barred action as four titles were on the line, two brothers came face to face with each other in the ring, and a new World Heavyweight Champion was crowned. Add to the mix, a great Goldberg match and a wild first-ever bat match, it was a stampede from start to finish!

BOOKER T
beat
CHRIS BENOIT

TV TITLE MATCH (No Time Limit)

Another classic TV title match from these two superstars, but with a controversial finish: Booker T actually tapped out to a Crippler Crossface, but the ref was unconscious. Booker T recovered and managed a Harlem Sidekick for the win. (14:11)



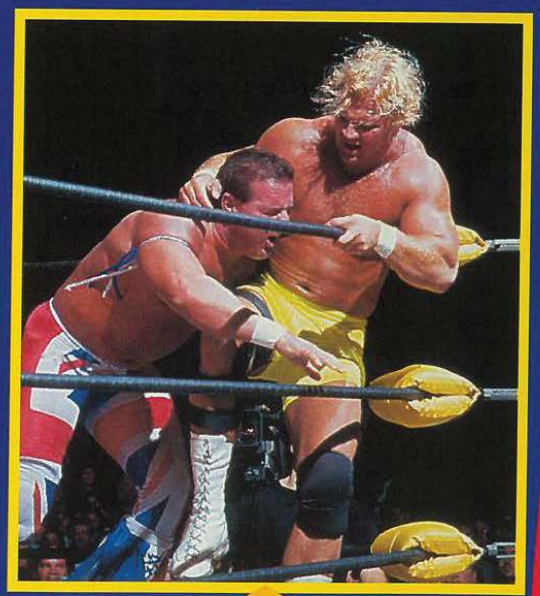
GOLDBERG
beat
SATURN

Even the added presence of Kidman at ringside couldn't prevent the undefeated Goldberg from scoring victory number 74 of his remarkable undefeated streak. (8:11)

CHRIS JERICHO
beat
PRINCE IAUKEA

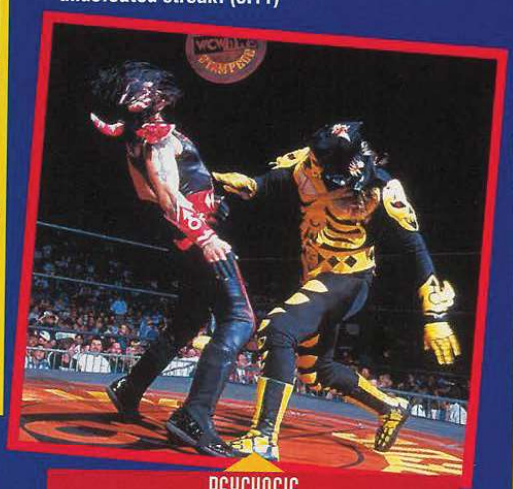
CRUISERWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

The Prince is one of WCW's brightest young stars, but Jericho was brutal in this bout. After the win, "LionHeart" added the Prince's sarong to his collection of souvenirs collected from defeated opponents. (9:48)



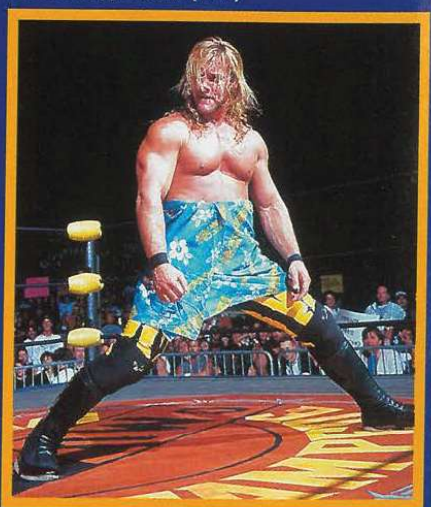
CURT HENNIG w/ Rick Rude
beat
BRITISH BULLDOG w/ Jim Neidhart

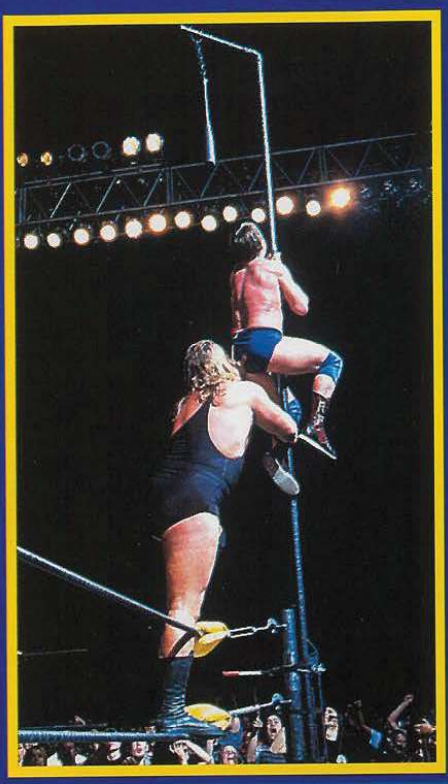
A wild melee as Hennig's confidant, Rick Rude, was handcuffed to a policeman. The "cop" turned out to be Vincent, who freed the Ravishing one, whose interference cost the Bulldog an important victory. Imperfect, indeed! (4:51)



PSYCHOSIS
beat
LA PARKA

La Parka started celebrating before the pinfall. Bad move on the part of the "Chairman." Psychosis knocked him off the ropes to score the pin. (7:04)

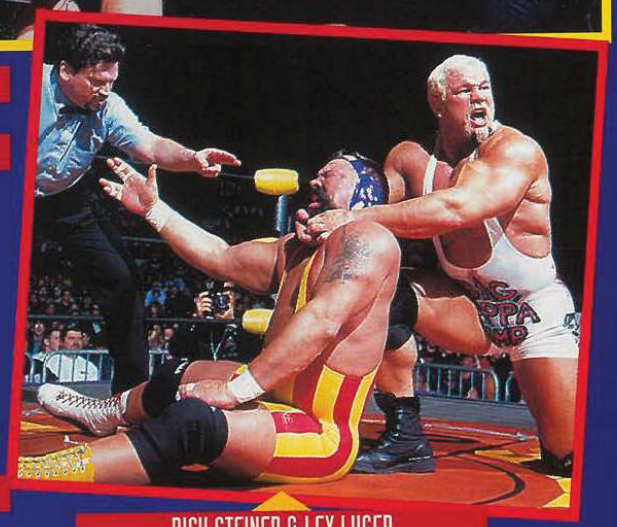




KEVIN NASH & HOLLYWOOD HOGAN
beat
ROWDY RODDY PIPER & GIANT

BAT MATCH

There was a lot of slugging goin' on in this bat match won by the nWo stalwarts. After the victory Hogan "accidentally" belted Nash with the bat after Piper moved away. A coming rift? (13:25)

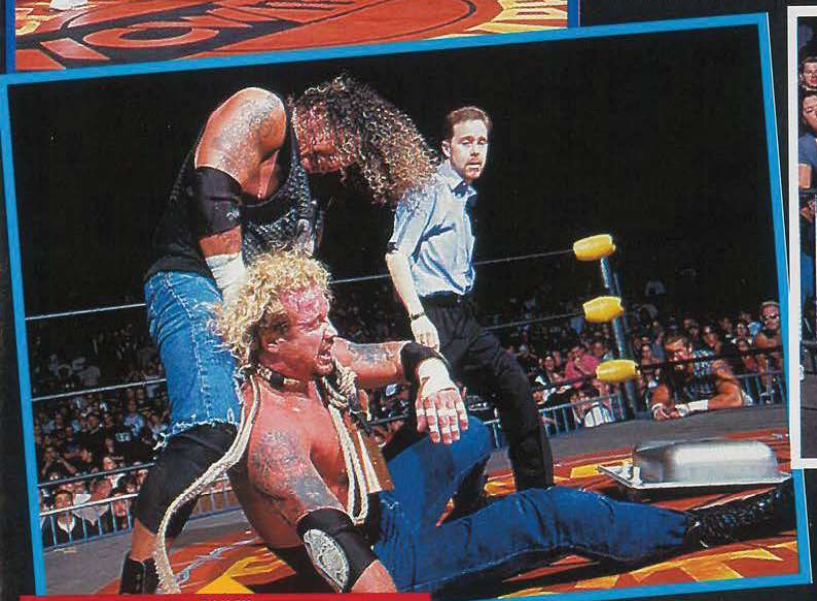


RICH STEINER & LEX LUGER
beat
SCOTT STEINER & BUFF BAGWELL

Suddenly blond, Scott's new nWo career got off to a slow start as Buff's ride on the Torture Rack meant defeat for the Black & White! (6:01)

ULTIMO DRAGON
beat
CHAVO GUERRERO, Jr.

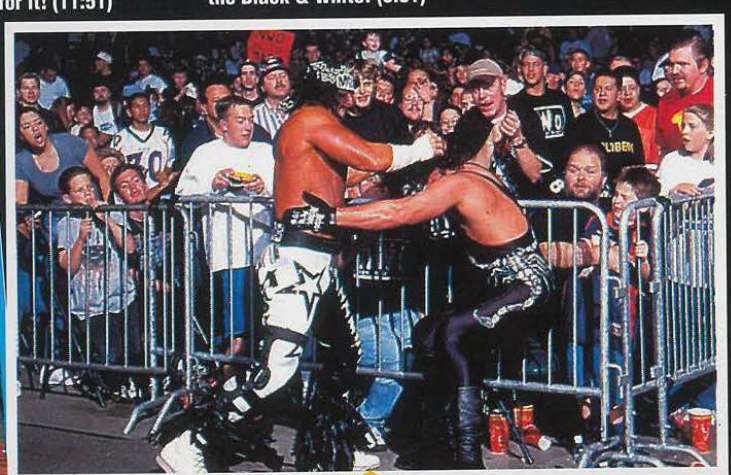
Eddy Guerrero vowed to ride his wacky relative twice as hard if he lost this match. Ultimo won, so Chavo was really in for it! (11:51)



RAVEN
beat
DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

U.S. TITLE MATCH

The Flock leader scored the U.S. title with this illegal victory over DDP. Aiding him was the newest, stop sign-wielding member of his entourage, the huge Horace. (11:57)

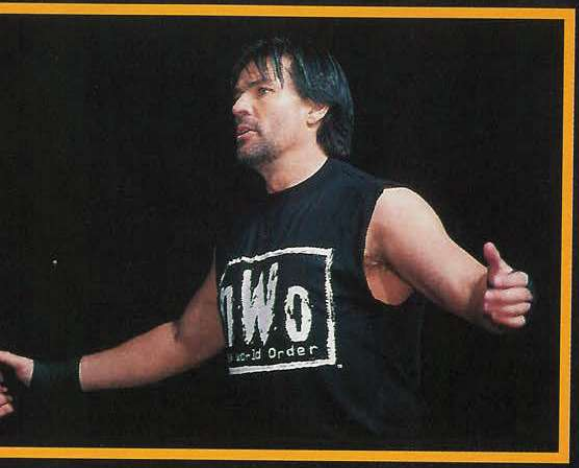


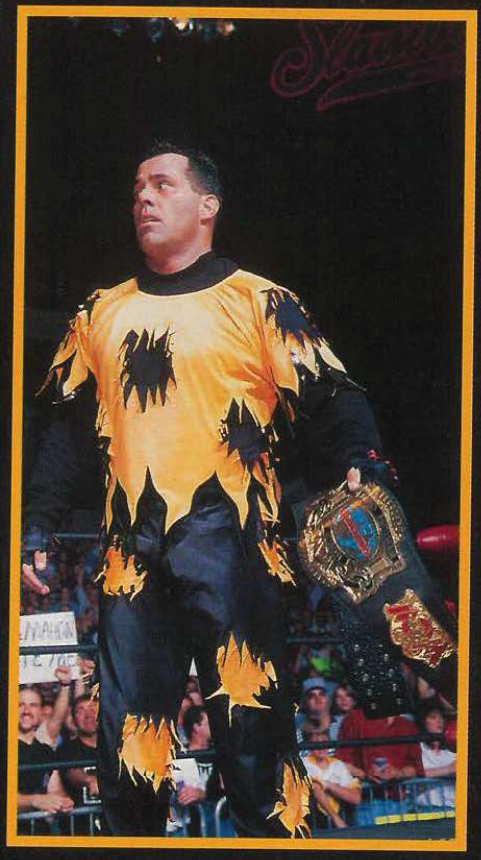
"MACHO MAN" RANDY SAVAGE
beat
STING

WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE
No Disqualification Match

Nash aided "Macho Man's" World title victory, which sent Hogan nearly out of his mind. "That's MY belt!" Hollywood fumed after the match. (10:21)

MAY





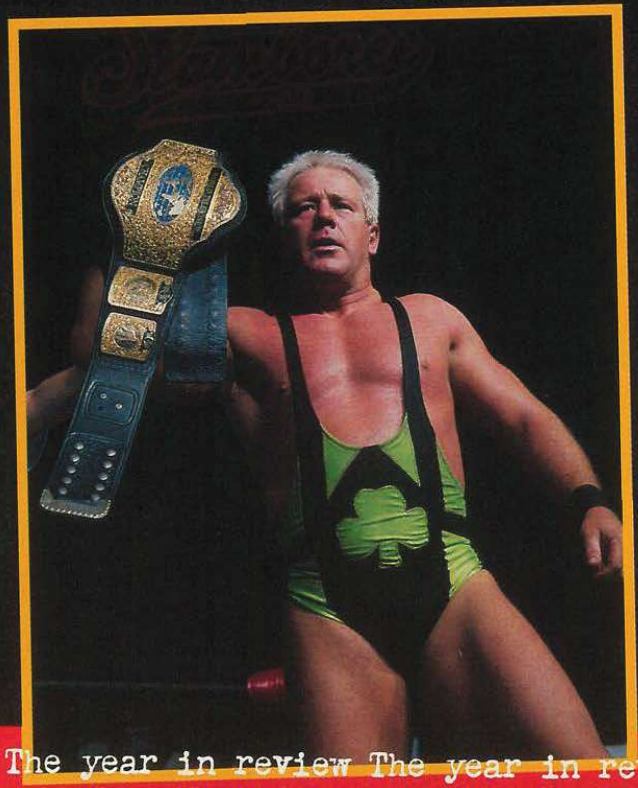
BISCHOFF vs. McMAHON?: For weeks, WWF owner Vince McMahon, Jr. had taken verbal potshots at WCW, and Eric Bischoff could take no more. On Nitro, he actually challenged McMahon to a bout at the Slamboree Pay-Per-View! Deadset on making a point, Bischoff instructed Doug Dellinger to issue a security pass for McMahon, and actually arrived in the ring at the appointed time, unlike his opponent. Cameras scoured the arena in search of McMahon as Michael Buffer made the announcements. The crowd waited in anticipation, but it was evident Vince had failed to meet the challenge. The crowd joined Mickey Jay as he counted to 10 and cheered as he raised Bischoff's hand in victory by forfeit. Love him or despise him, Bischoff had made it very clear by staging this non-match, that if anyone had anything to say about WCW, they would be welcome to come on TV and try to prove their point. By failing to answer the challenge Vince McMahon proved he could talk the talk, but was lacking when it came to walking the walk.

JERICHO'S JUST DESSERTS: For months, Cruiserweight Champion Chris Jericho claimed that he had "retired" Dean Malenko, that he had run the second-generation star out of the sport forever. Well, nothing could have been farther from the truth. Early in the Slamboree card, a 15-man Cruiserweight Battle Royal for the opportunity to meet Jericho for the title was held, with Mexican star Ciclope becoming the winner ... until "Ciclope" removed his mask, revealing himself to be Malenko! Why had Juventud Guerrera tossed himself over the top rope, allowing Ciclope to win? He obviously knew something the rest of us didn't, including Jericho! It took only a bit over seven minutes to beat Jericho, and to add insult to injury, Malenko defeated Jericho by submission, using his Texas Cloverleaf to score the biggest and most satisfying win of his WCW career.

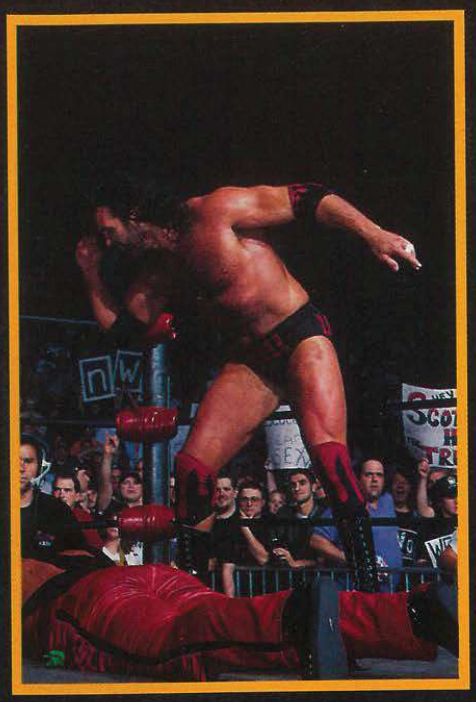
1998'S BIGGEST UPSET: Many fans underrate him, but just ask the experts, as well as his opponents: Rugged, raw-boned Fit Finlay is one of the toughest wrestlers ever to lace up a pair of boots. When Booker T took on Finlay during the May 4th edition of Nitro from Indianapolis, Booker T may have thought of the match as a welcome respite from the tough time that the "Canadian Crippler," Chris Benoit had been giving him. Benoit's appearance at ringside caused Booker T to become distracted, and that moment allowed Finlay to secure his tombstone piledriver and score a most unexpected pin. But give Finlay his propers. The Irish legend scored a victory over Benoit at Slamboree, and this time, Booker T was a nuisance at ringside. These victories proved what mat experts already knew: Dave "Fit" Finlay is the sport's most overlooked true great.

WOLFPAC DEBUTS: It was obvious that Hogan and Nash could no longer see eye to eye, but the May 4th edition of Nitro was the first actual appearance of Nash's new concept: The Red & Black nWo Wolfpac. During a match between Scott Putski and Kidman, Nash, Randy Savage, and Konnan barreled their way through the crowd, then rushed the ring and disrupted the match. Afterwards, they announced their first Wolfpac recruit would be Curt Hennig, but that association proved to be fleeting. However, on the May 25th Nitro, the Wolfpac shocked the world by adding Lex Luger to the fold. Immediately, the "Total Package" announced he was going to do everything he could to bring his own personal recruit on board - none other than Sting. At the end of that broadcast, Luger offered Sting a Red & Black T-shirt, but the ever-stoic superstar didn't immediately join. After considering it carefully, the "Stinger" did eventually become a Wolfpac member, making this faction one of the most powerful — and popular — in the sport's history.

BROTHERLY HATE: Rick Steiner simply couldn't stomach the fact that his brother, Scott, had turned nWo. On the May 4th Nitro, he called his younger brother out and challenged him to a match. Scott limped out on a pair of crutches, claiming he was too injured to fight, but also "tearfully" admitted that he couldn't stand being away from his family and that the rift between the brothers was causing too much grief in their family. Scott actually pleaded for another chance, but as Rick tried to make up his mind, he was attacked from behind by fellow nWo thug Brian Adams, who used a baseball bat to pound Rick into submission. Rick suffered a serious shoulder injury and lost plenty of mat time because of this nefarious and sickening ambush, but the battle between the Steiners was just beginning.



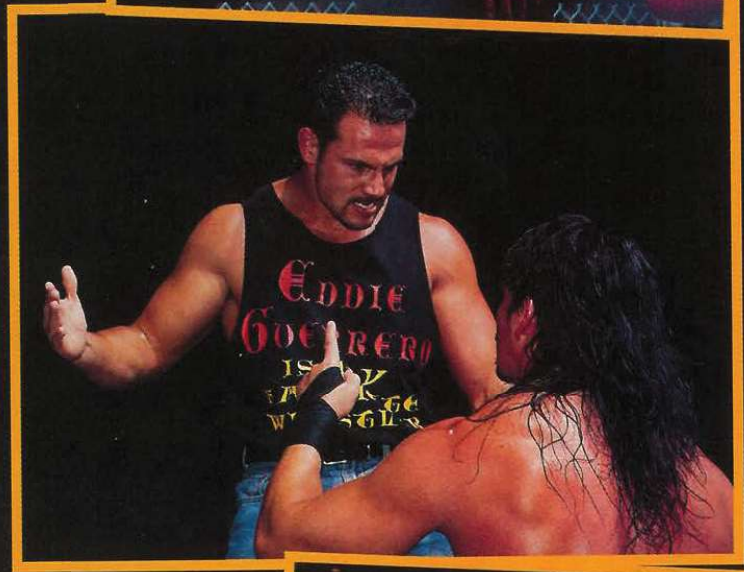
GIANT MEANDERINGS, DOWN THE HALL: Once nWo, always nWo, it seems. Angered by the defection of the Wolfpac stars from the Black & White, Hollywood Hogan brought Giant back into the nWo. The results were immediate, as the 7'4" mastodon became not only the focal point of almost every nWo attack, but the safeguard that kept Hogan and his closest cronies safe from harm, even in the face of gang ups and retaliations. Score this one for Hogan, but Nash and company had another important member to recruit. Giant and Sting won the WCW World Tag Team titles from the Outsiders Slamboree on May 17th in Worcester, MA, but could not get along after Giant's defection to the nWo, causing one of the strangest unions in WCW tag history. However, it would turn out to be Scott Hall's betrayal of

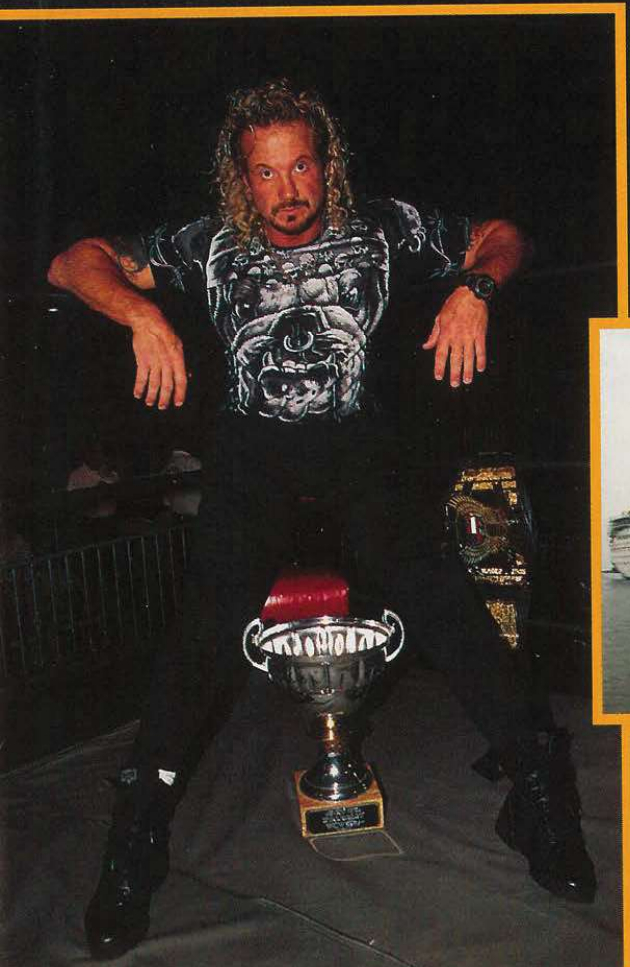


Nash that spelled the difference in the bout, as Hall shocked the world by blasting Nash with one of the title belts, allowing Giant to score the pinfall. Hall and Nash best friends? You couldn't tell from the way Giant, Hall, and Dusty Rhodes celebrated this sordid victory.

MAY MUSINGS

WCW/nWo Magazine announced its 1997 Reader Awards. Larry Zbyszko took home Announcer of the Year honors for the first time, while Bill Goldberg was voted Newcomer of the Year. Diamond Dallas Page was Wrestler of the Year, The Steiner Brothers, already on the outs by the time the award was handed to them, were Tag Team of the Year, Ted DiBiase was Manager of the Year, Eddy Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio, Jr. was deemed the Match of the Year, Arn Anderson was thrilled with his Special Award for his lifetime of contributions to the sport ... Mortis officially became Kanyon after Diamond Dallas Page won a wild Bowery Death Cage match at Slamboree against Raven. Kanyon seemed hell bent on ending Raven's career at this point. So did Perry Saturn, who announced he had left The Flock and was wrestling for himself ... Chris Benoit and Booker T began a best-of-seven series, with the winner to become top contender for the TV title. Benoit took the first bout on the May 25th edition of Nitro ... It was a huge month for Juventud Guerrera, who inched his way closer to Cruiserweight title contention with several big wins ... Eddy Guerrero continued to berate and humiliate Chavo. The months were passing and Chavo's frustration was only growing stronger ... WCW continued its pursuit of new ways to bring matches to the fans, including the first Backstage Blast DirecTV telecast during the May 18th edition of Nitro, which featured several exclusive bouts ... Chris Jericho attacked Joe Malenko ... The third Bruise Cruise set sail with Hacksaw Jim Duggan, Disco Inferno, Scotty Riggs and Rick Rude on board. Disco proved his skills as a Blackjack dealer matched his ability on the dance floor.



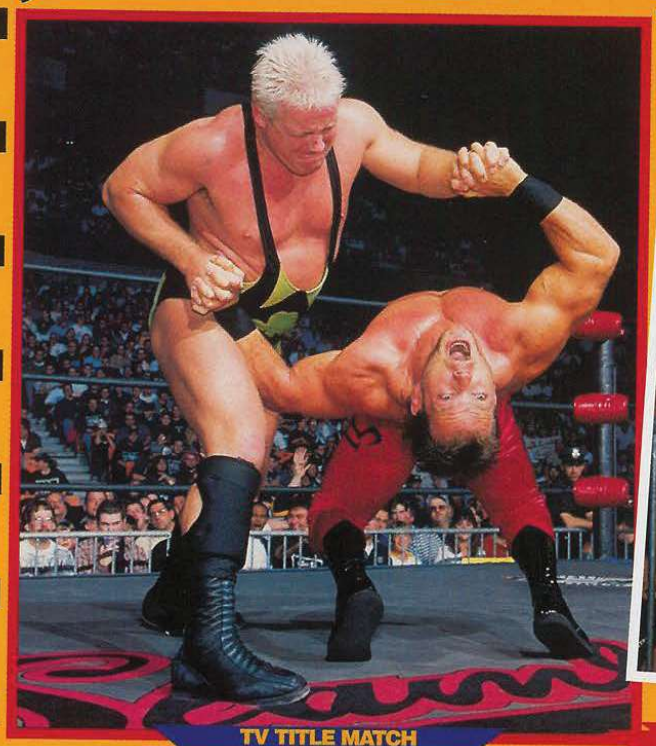


Slamboree

WCW/nWo

May 17, 1998 - Worcester, MA

Slamboree will certainly be remembered for one of the most shocking events in recent memory. Hall and Nash, who had stuck together through thick and thin, ended their seemingly unbreakable bond following an act of treachery by Scott Hall. Add the fact that Sting was teamed up with Giant who had turned from WCW to join Hollywood Hogan's nWo faction to wrestle the Outsiders, and you had one of the most intense and riveting matches on the card. Along with the tag titles, every other title except the World Heavyweight Championship was on the line. So was Chavo Guerrero's freedom. Throw in a one of a kind Bowery Death match between rivals DDP and Raven (in a cage), and the re-emergence of a Cruiserweight superstar. If that wasn't enough, there was a wild Savage/Hart match officiated by Roddy Piper, making this an awesome event that kept the crowd wondering and watching in anticipation.



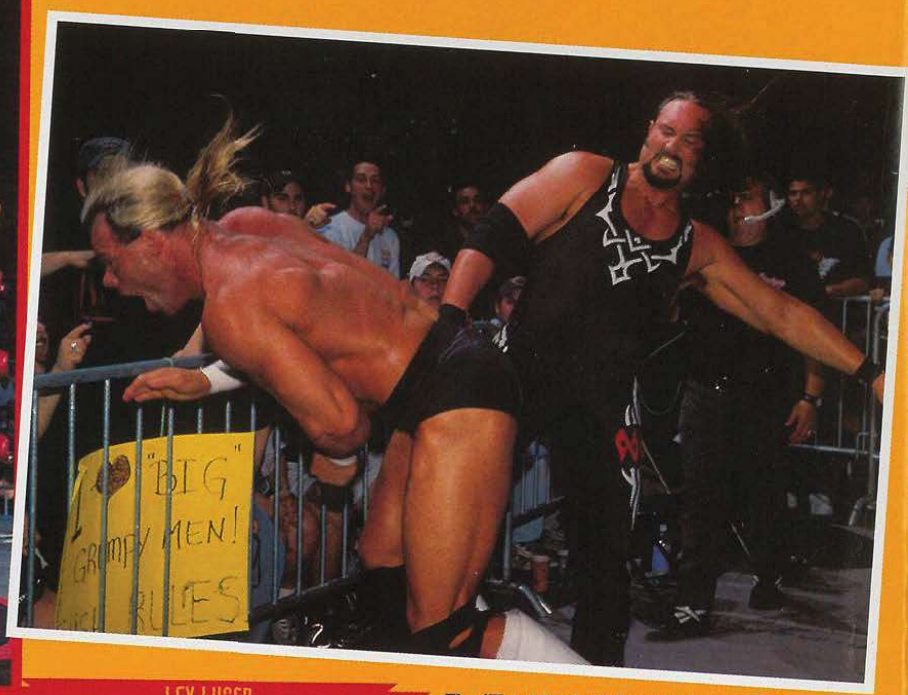
TV TITLE MATCH

FIT FINLAY

beat

CHRIS BENOIT

Distraction from Booker T caused the "Crippler" to lose control ... and Finlay to score a tombstone piledriver and a big victory in defense of his TV title! (14:54)

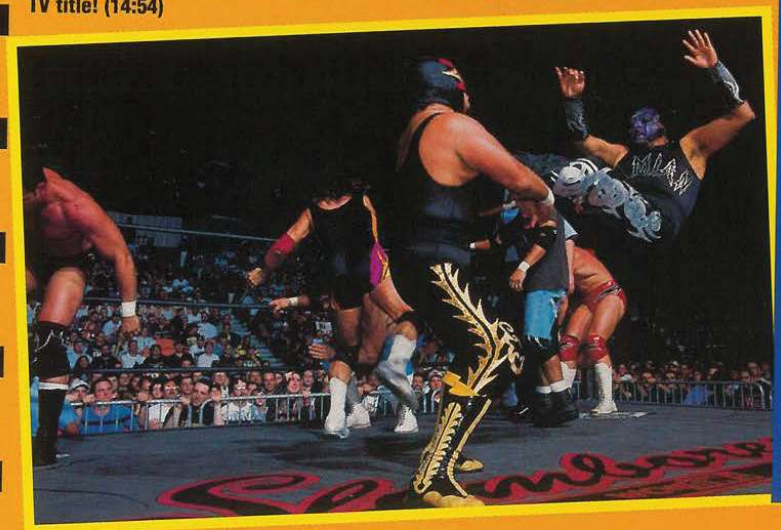


LEX LUGER

beat

BRIAN ADAMS

The "Total Package" wanted revenge for Adams' attack on Rick Steiner, and he got it with a stirring Torture Rack submission victory! (5:05)



15 MAN

CRUISERWEIGHT BATTLE ROYAL

Surprise, surprise: This bout was won by Ciclope, who unmasked, revealing himself to actually be Dean Malenko — just who Chris Jericho didn't want to face for the Cruiserweight title! (8:43)

CRUISERWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

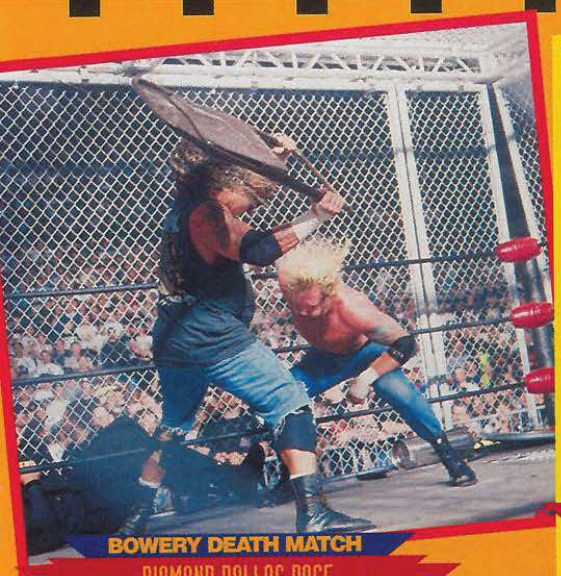
DEAN MALENKO

beat

CHRIS JERICHO

Malenko dedicated this Cruiserweight title victory to his father. Using his Texas Cloverleaf he scored a most unexpected win over one of WCW's toughest competitors, Chris Jericho. (7:03)

Slamboree, Worcester, MA Slamboree, Worcester, MA Slamboree, Worcester, MA Slamboree



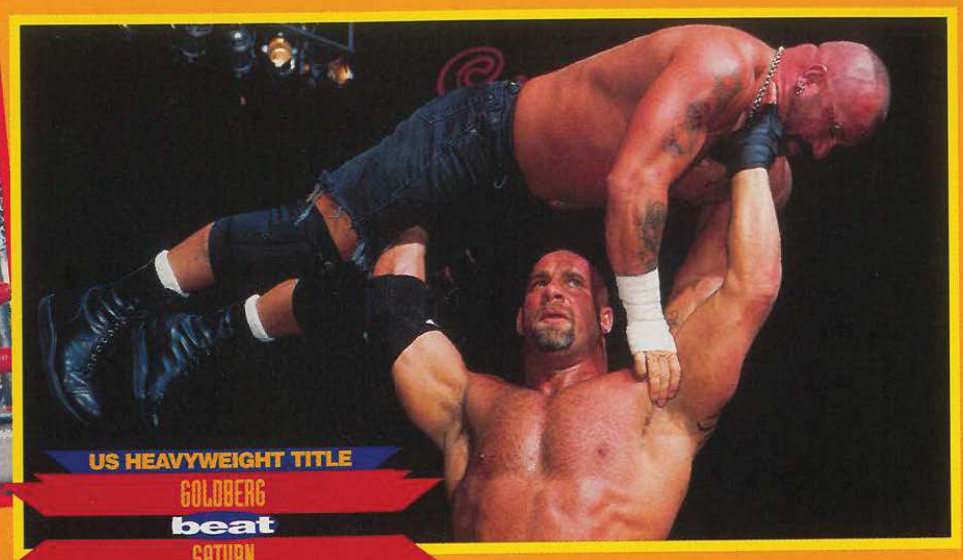
BOWERY DEATH MATCH

DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

beat

RAVEN

This violent steel cage Bowery Death match saw DDP score the win by Knockout — and Mortis reveal himself as Kanyon, who then brutally attacked Raven. (14:39)



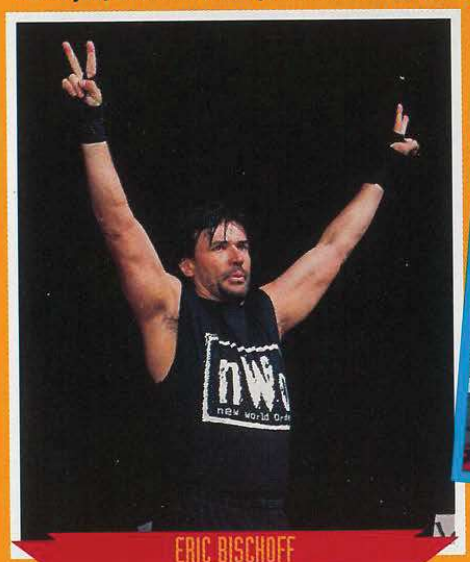
US HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

GOLDBERG

beat

SATURN

This was supposed to be a "gauntlet" match where Goldberg took on the entire Flock in defense of his U.S. title, but Saturn wanted to go it alone. Saturn proved his worth, but Goldberg proved he still couldn't be defeated! (7:01)

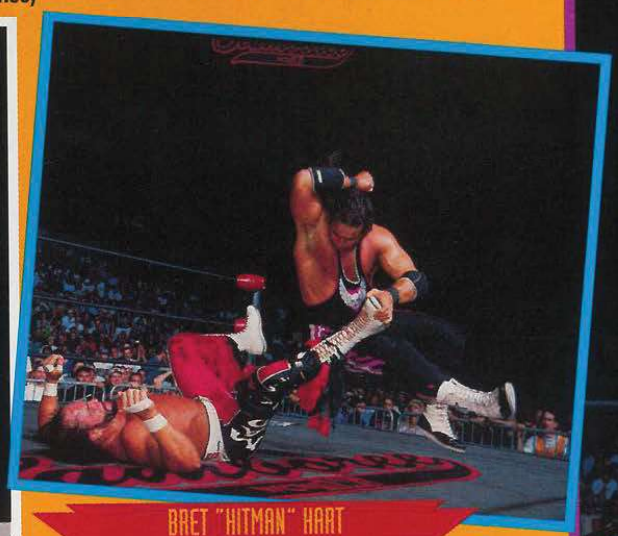


ERIC BISCHOFF

beat

VINCE McMAHON

No actual match, but a bold statement by the WCW President. Probably the only actual bold move ever made by the cunning Bischoff! (Victory by forfeit)



BRET "HITMAN" HART

beat

"MACHO MAN" RANDY SAVAGE

w/ Special Guest Referee ROWDY RODDY PIPER

Rowdy Roddy Piper was the special referee, but distraction by Miss Elizabeth allowed a brass-knuckles-wielding "Hitman" to score a most disgusting victory. (16:38)

FREEDOM MATCH

EDDY GUERRERO

beat

ULTIMO DRAGON

This "freedom" match would have meant that Chavo would win his emancipation from Eddy if Eddy lost to the Dragon, but it was not to be. In fact, because of a pre-match stipulation, Chavo had to plant a kiss on Eddy's cheek! (11:15)

TAG TEAM TITLE MATCH

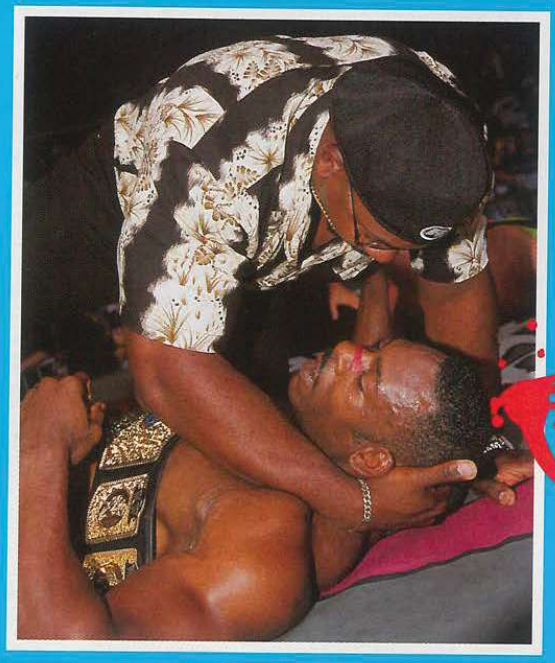
STING & GIANT

beat

THE OUTSIDERS

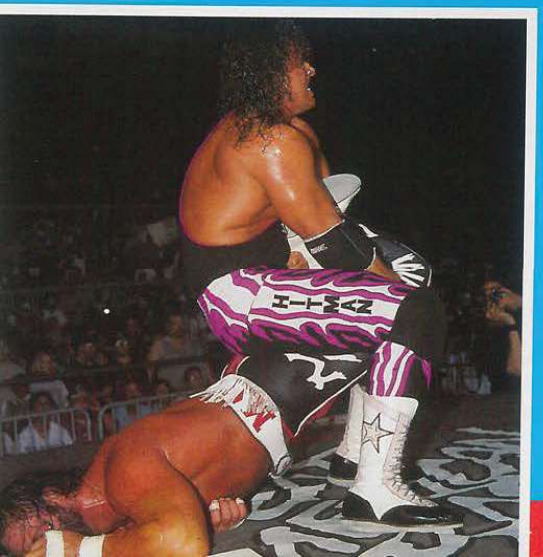
Confusion reigned as Sting and Giant won the World Tag Team titles, even though they couldn't stand each other! Hall blasted Nash with one of the World title belts, allowing Giant to score the pinfall! What a scene: Giant, Hall, and Dusty Rhodes celebrating as Sting stood in stunned, disgusted silence. (14:07)

JUNE



BOOKER'S THE BEST: 1998 was the year that Booker T went from tag team legend to full-fledged singles superstar. He managed to win the best-of-seven series versus Chris Benoit (that actually was a best of eight because of Bret Hart's interference in match seven when Benoit refused to cover Booker T for a tainted victory). Their Great American Bash match was the final conflict in a series of bouts that are still being talked about to this day. Later at the Bash, Booker T received his long awaited TV title shot against Fit Finlay. Proving that all his hard work against Benoit wasn't for naught, he defeated the Irish star to end what surely was the greatest night of Booker T's singles career. Amazingly, given the events of later months, Stevie Ray congratulated his brother in the ring following his TV title victory.

A SAVAGE INJURY: Randy Savage wrestled twice at the Great American Bash. First, he teamed with Piper to take on Bret Hart and Hollywood Hogan. The nWo team won by submission as Hart trapped Savage in the sharpshooter following outside interference by the Disciple. Despite the severity of his knee injury, he faced his partner, Roddy Piper in match that the rowdy Scot won by submission as Savage's knee could not stand up to Piper's



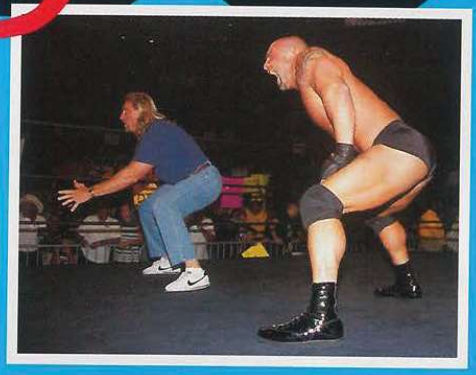


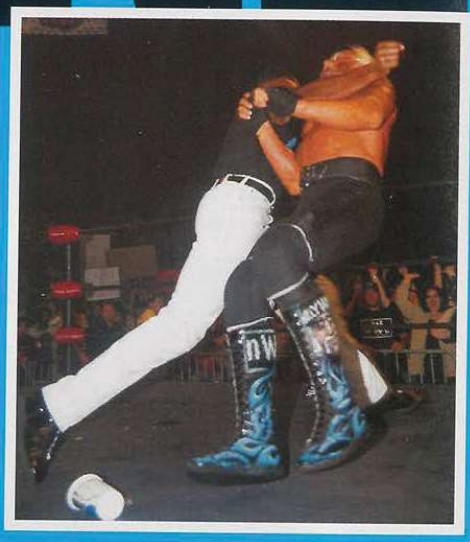
figure-four. A wild steel cage bout versus DDP on Nitro the next night only made the injury worse. nWo Hollywood had gained control of the cage, allowing them to take over the match until Nash was able to wrest the cage controls away. As a result, Savage was forced onto the disabled list; he would fail to wrestle at all during the second half of 1998.

IT AIN'T EASY BEIN' GREENE: NFL superstar Kevin Greene wrestled Giant after an nWo attack during Nitro. But for once, the nWo didn't play their cards close enough to the vest. Unbeknownst to Hogan and company, Greene used to room with Goldberg during their NFL days together. During a gang up at the end of his match against Giant, Goldberg stormed the ring and took care of business, driving the Black & White from the ring and protecting Greene from further damage. It was just another great Goldberg moment of many during this golden year for the rookie sensation.

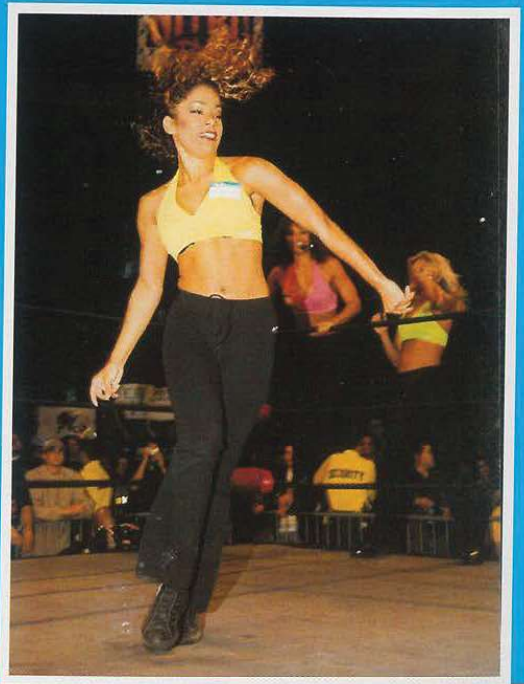
ENTER THE MAILMAN: The month got off to a sordid start as Dennis Rodman returned to the nWo during an edition of Nitro. Later in the broadcast, Kevin Nash asked DDP to join the Wolfpac, but as Page stood in the ring entranceway pondering his decision, he was brutally attacked by Hogan and Rodman, who bashed him repeatedly with steel chairs in a hideous assault. How would Page garner his revenge? He showed up with another NBA star two weeks later: Karl Malone, who stormed the ring with Page as Hogan stood in the center while his "brave" Black & White cronies bailed out. Malone shocked the world as he blasted Hogan with a pair of clotheslines and a perfect body slam. The stage was set for Bash at the Beach: Hogan & Rodman versus Malone & Page.

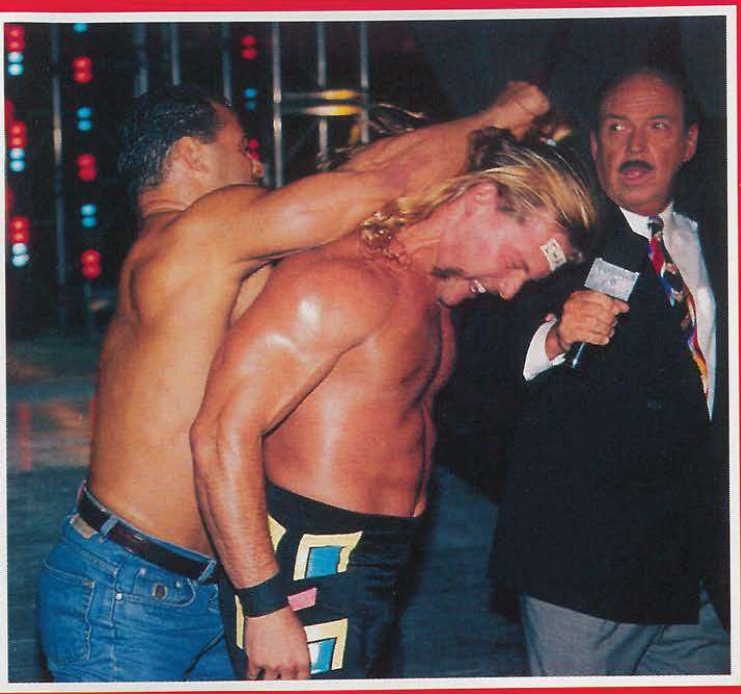
JUNE JIVIN'

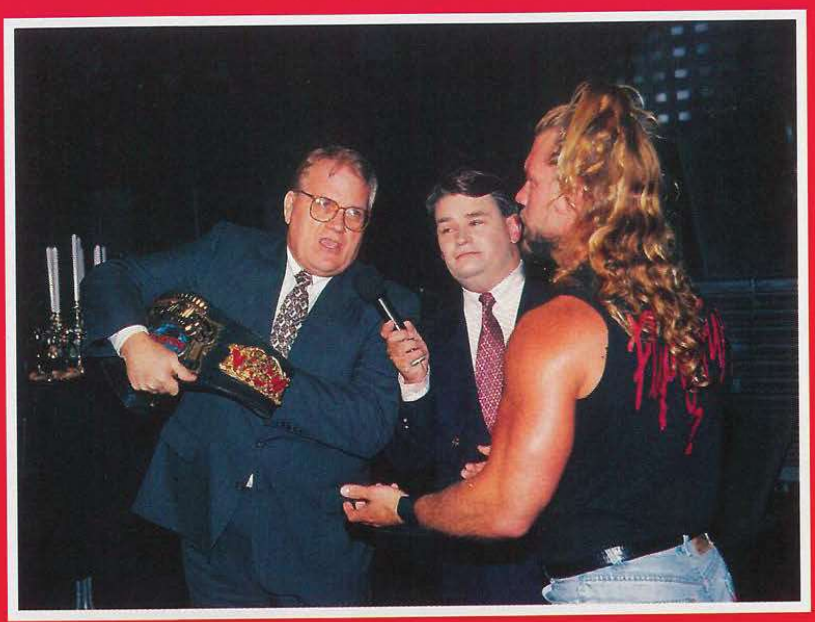
Sting officially joined the Wolfpac, aiding



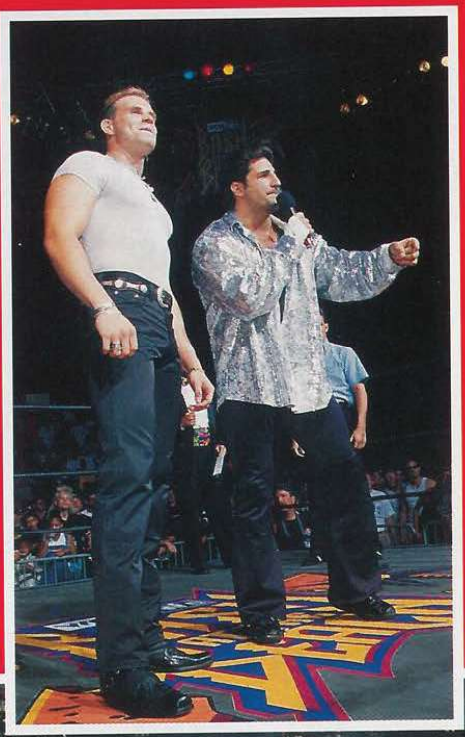
Nash and Luger during an nWo attack ... A loss to U.S. Champion Goldberg seemed to drive Chavo Guerrero, Jr. over the edge more than ever before. Chavo became a giggling, howling wreck ... Tygress joined The Nitro Girls on June 2nd ... After seven-foot Flock member Reese had interfered

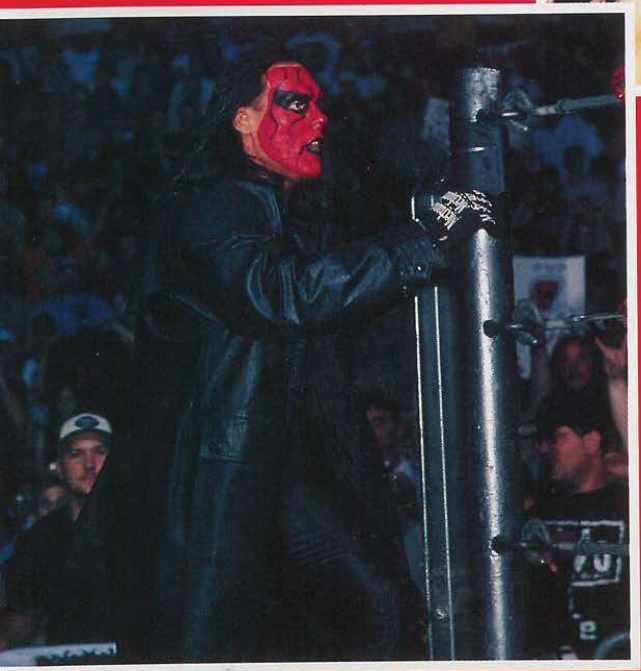






during a bout against Chris Jericho, Juventud Guerrera challenged him to a match at the Great American Bash — and Juvi won handily ... Raven impersonated Mortis during Kanyon's bout against Saturn at the Bash, which Kanyon won by pinfall ... Dean Malenko lost to Chris Jericho by disqualification at the Bash, giving "LionHeart" the vacant Cruiserweight title. Malenko was forced to give up the belt when the Executive Committee agreed with Jericho that since Malenko had gained the title shot by impersonating Ciclope, he could no longer hold the title. And since this was a no-disqualification bout, "Mr. Loophole," Jericho, got what he wanted yet again ... On June 2, Junkyard Dog died in a car crash after he fell asleep at the wheel ... Jericho's dad, hockey legend Chris Irvine, showed up and told him he was a disgrace to the family ... Speculation was at fever-pitch that Warrior would be returning to wrestling ... Disco Inferno and Alex Wright formed a tag team ... Eric Bischoff created his own version of *The Tonight Show* and his first guest was Scott Steiner.



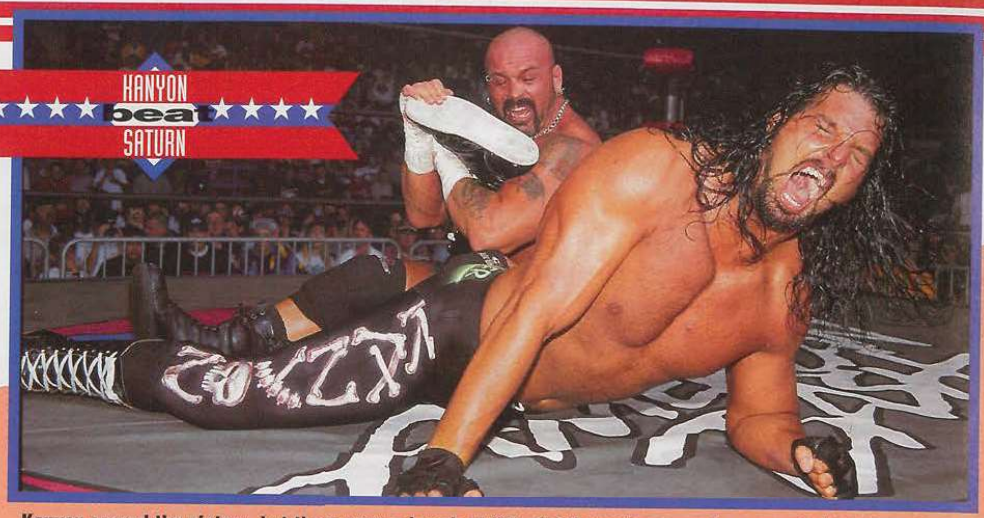


WCW/nWo THE GREAT AMERICAN BASH

June 14, 1998 - Baltimore, MD

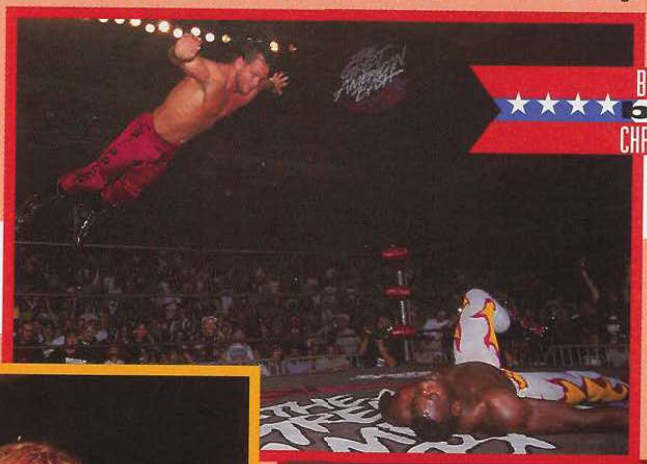
This year's Great American Bash was filled with grudge matches as Eddy and Chavo Guerrero squared off, Giant and Sting went at it for possession of the tag team belts, and Jericho and Malenko went one-on-one for the vacated Cruiserweight title. Add to that the 8th and final matchup between Booker T and Chris Benoit in the Best of Seven series, the first ever Hogan & Hart versus Savage & Piper tag match, as well as Goldberg's 100th match. This truly was an event that had something for everyone!

KANYON beat SATURN



Kanyon scored the victory, but there were a bunch of "Mortis's" running around — one of which turned out to be Raven, who fled the ring and let The Flock take a brutal beating from Saturn. (14:47)

BOOKER T beat CHRIS BENOIT



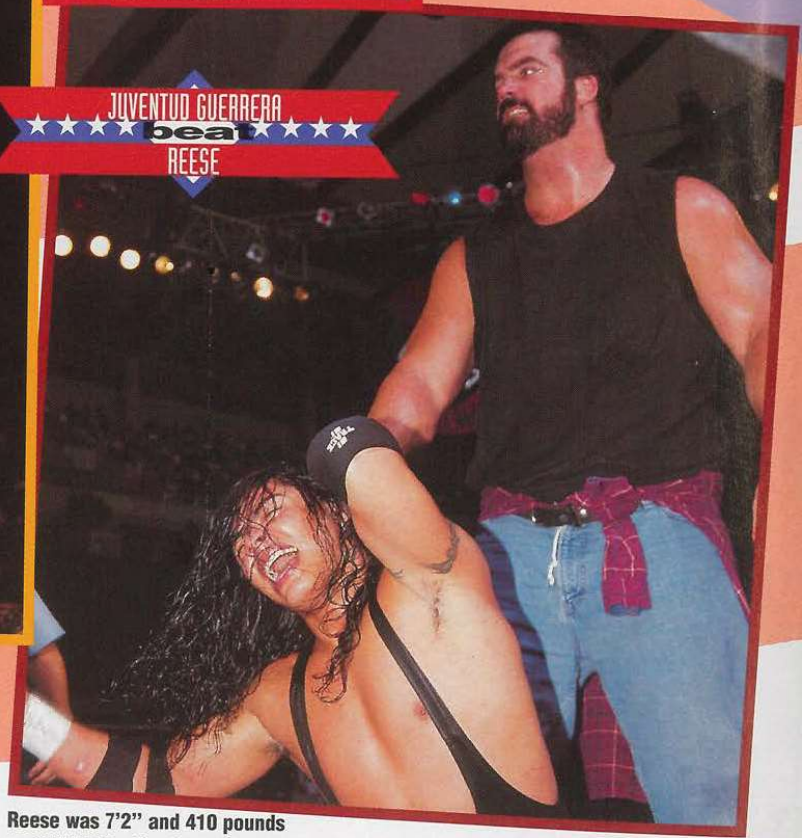
This re-do of the seventh match of this classic Best of Seven title contending tournament saw Booker T score the victory for the right to face Fit Finlay for the TV title. (16:20)

CHRIS JERICHO beat DEAN MALENKO

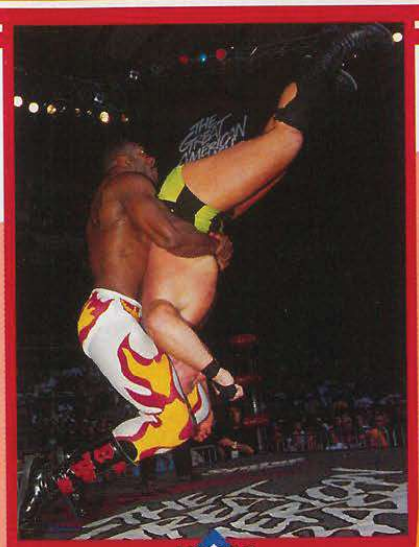
CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

The belt had been declared vacant after "Mr. Loophole," Jericho, found it in the rulebook that Malenko's previous victory could not stand. Jericho scored a tainted DQ victory here, giving him undisputed control of the belt once again! Why was Malenko disqualified? Jericho once again insulted The Great Malenko, causing Dean to snap! (13:52)

JUVENTUD GUERRERA beat REESE

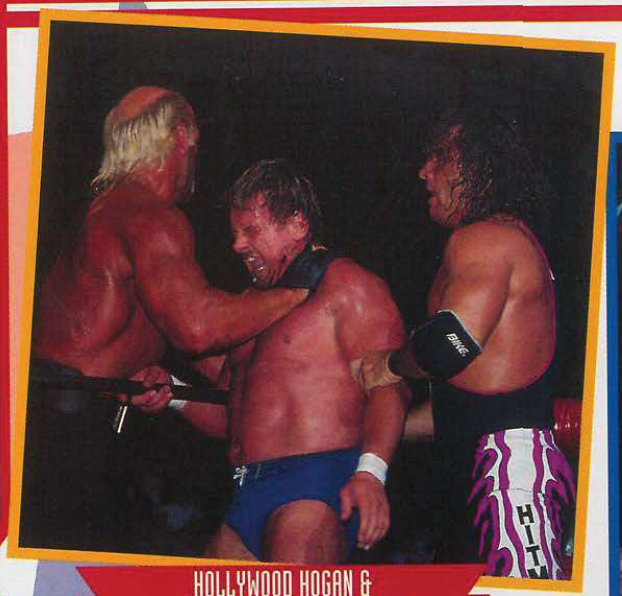


Reese was 7'2" and 410 pounds — and lost to the diminutive Juvi, who got a little help from a chair-swinging Van Hammer! (8:46)



BOOKER T
beat
FIT FINLAY
TV TITLE

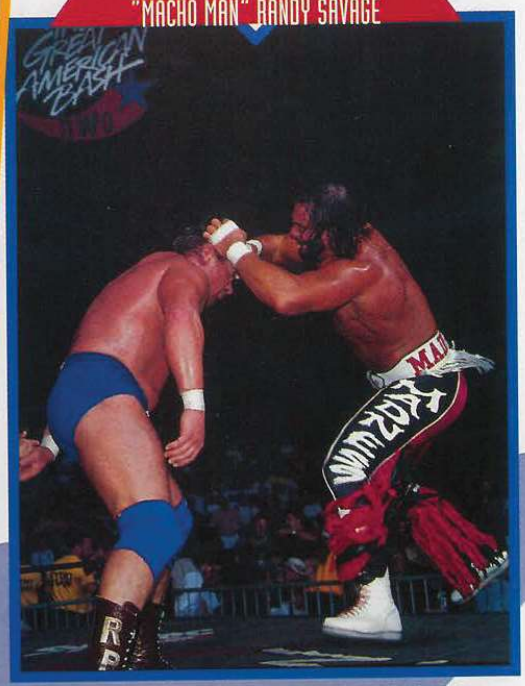
Booker T certainly earned his TV title victory with this second win of the night. After the win, Stevie Ray congratulated Booker T in the ring. (13:13)



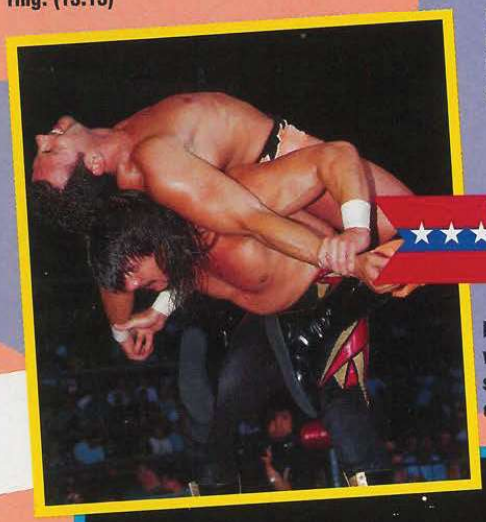
HOLLYWOOD HOGAN & BRET "HITMAN" HART
beat
ROWDY RODDY PIPER & "MACHO MAN" RANDY SAVAGE

Piper and Savage were to go at it in the next bout, but worked together well as a team, but interference by the Disciple cost Savage a victory to Hart's Sharpshooter. (11:42)

ROWDY RODDY PIPER
beat
"MACHO MAN" RANDY SAVAGE

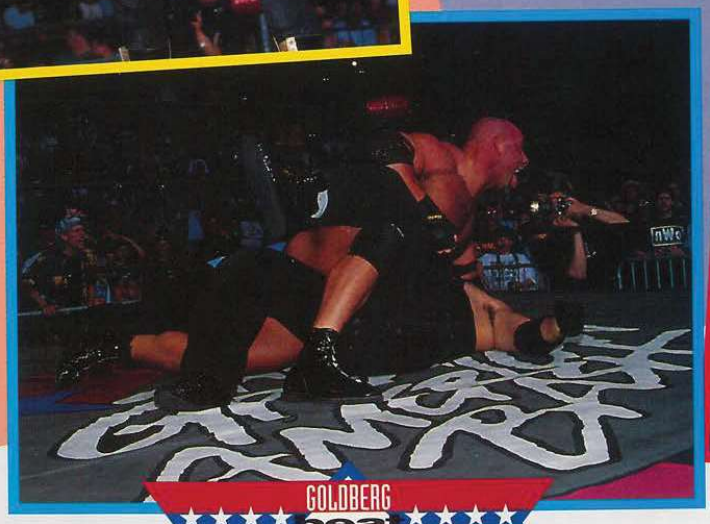


Savage's knee, already damaged, simply couldn't take Piper's figure-four in a bout that Piper really didn't want to even start. (6:41)



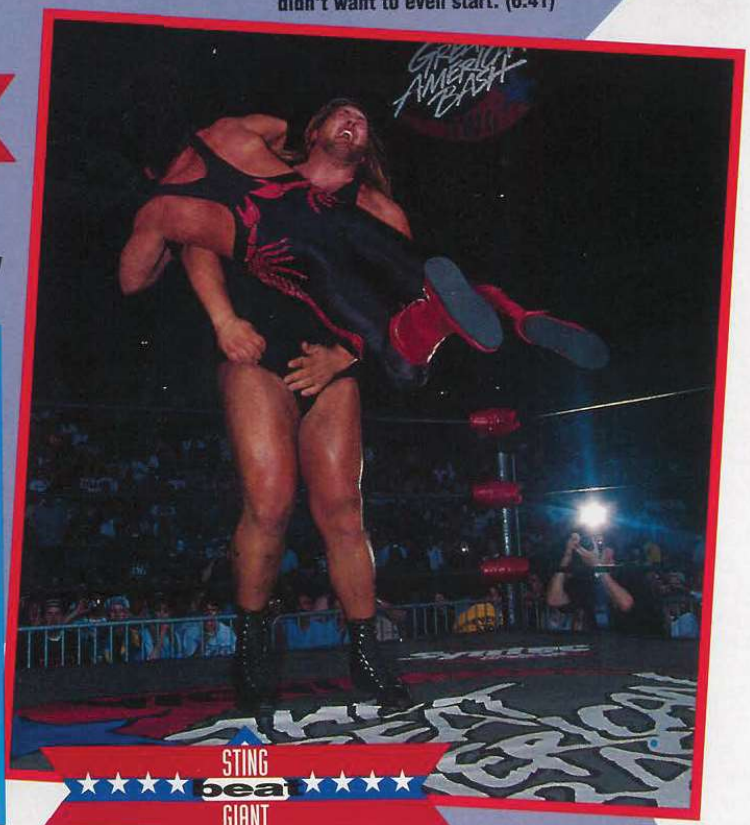
CHAVO GUERRERO, JR.
beat
EDDY GUERRERO

It was sweet vindication for the wacky Chavo. After months of strife, he scored a pinfall victory over his "Uncle Eddy!" (14:45)



GOLDBERG
beat
KONNAN
U.S. HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

Goldberg ran through Konnan for victory number 100, but after the pinfall K-Dogg was attacked by Curt Hennig and Rick Rude, whose colors instantly changed from Red & Black to Black & White! (1:57)



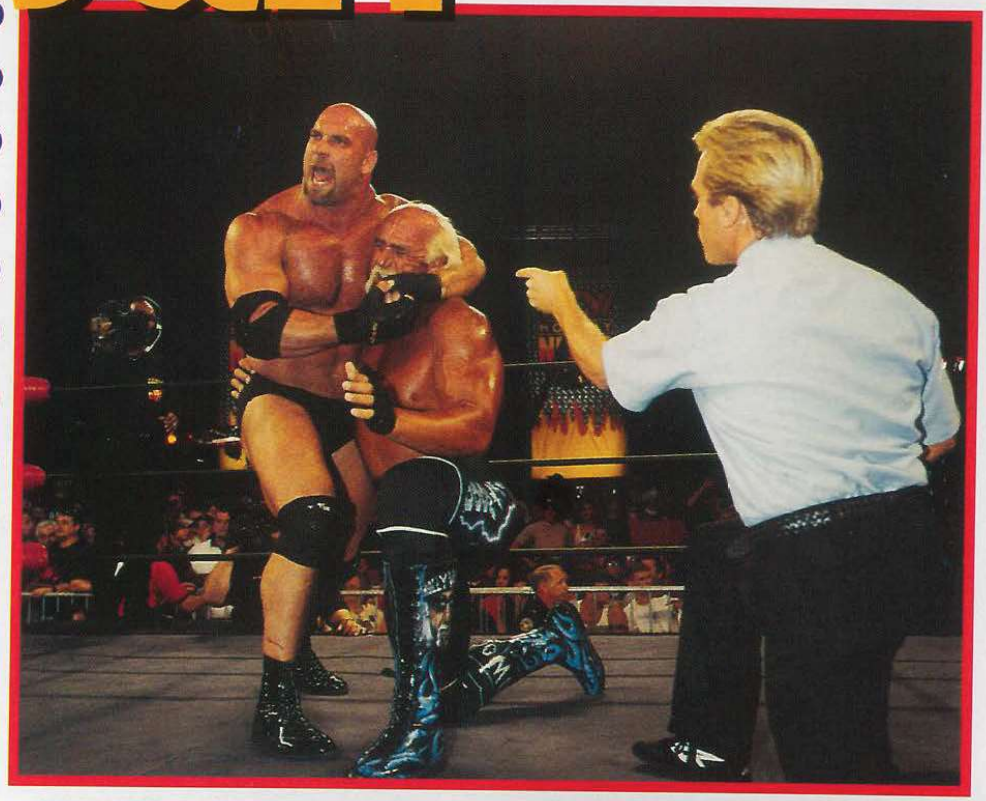
STING
beat
GIANT
WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

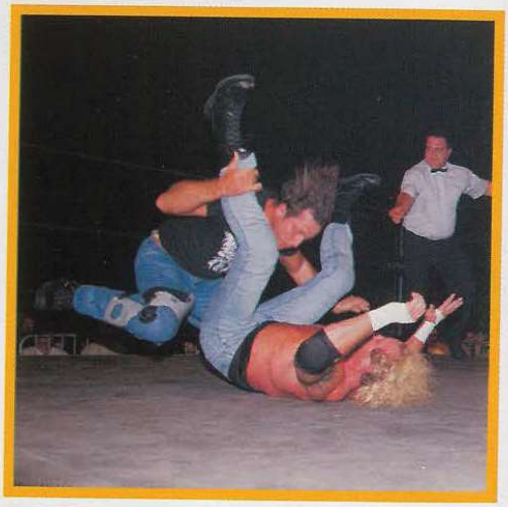
The World Tag Team title was up for grabs in this singles bout, as the "Stinger" and Giant could no longer team together due to their deep hatred. Sting won after a Deathdrop, allowing him to pick a new partner. Sting chose Kevin Nash as his team-mate. (6:41)

JULY

Hogan and Rodman together and sending them flying from the ring. The real story of this match, however, was that of the Disciple. It appeared that Page and Malone were on their way to victory when Disciple blasted Page with the Apocalypse, allowing Hogan to cover Page for the pinfall. The nWo celebrated yet another tainted win, but do they ever feel any pride?

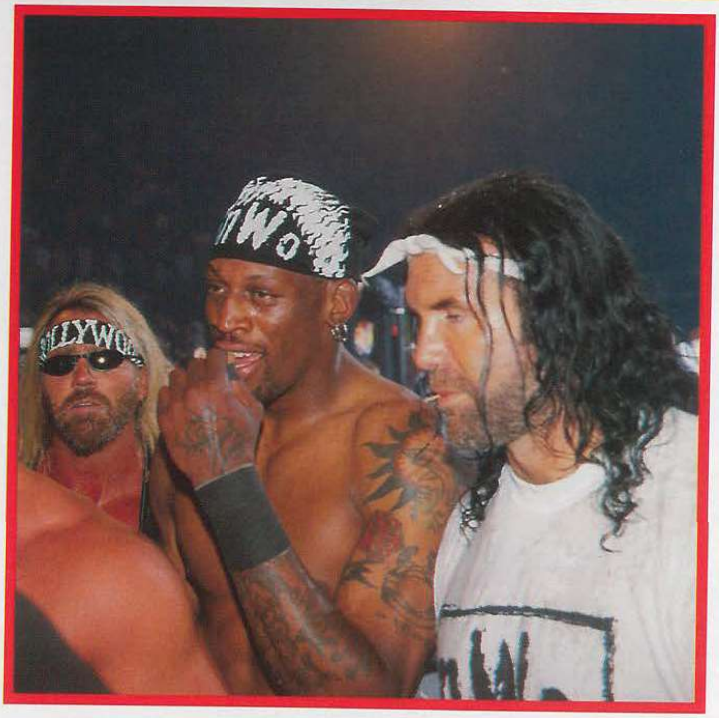
CHANGE (AND CHANGE AND CHANGE) OF HART: DDP had been the fighting U.S. Champion he had always dreamed of being, but when facing someone as sinister as Bret Hart had become, even being courageous isn't enough. Page was attacked by a mysterious assailant during an edition of Nitro, where he suffered knee and rib damage, but he still insisted on fighting Hart for the vacated belt, which Goldberg gave up after winning the World title. Smelling blood, Hart went for Page's legs, twice executing the sharpshooter, with the second time being the charm. Page could not help but submit, but with everything else that had gone on during July, it was easy to forgive DDP this loss. It was clear that the "Hitman" had become just that, merciless and brutal.

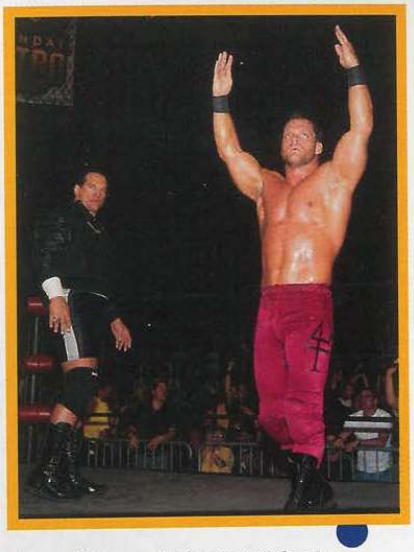


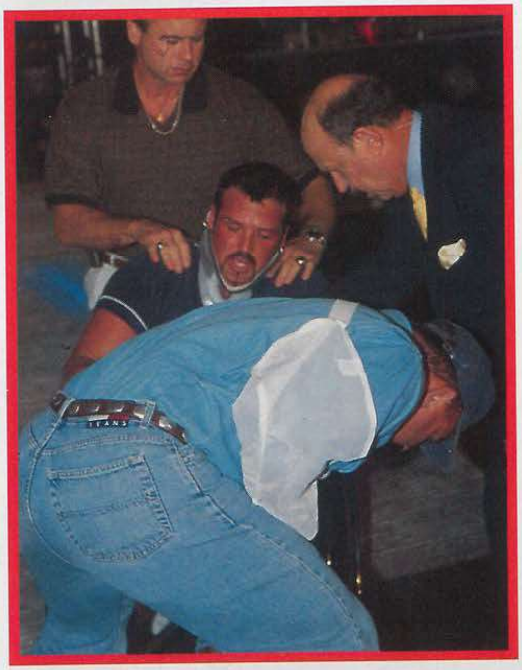


GOLDBERG GETS THE GOLD: Many fans considered it to be the biggest Nitro night of the year, an opinion that would be hard to dispute. On the July 6th Nitro, from Atlanta, J.J. Dillon announced that after his undefeated streak continued unabated, the Executive Committee had no choice but to grant Goldberg a World title opportunity against Hogan that night. Hogan couldn't weasel out of it, but demanded that Goldberg take on Scott Hall first. To Goldberg, two matches against world-class opponents didn't even faze him. After he barreled his way through a game Hall, Hogan was next and he was quaking in his boots by the time the main event took place. It was no easy go of it for Goldberg, but after his patented Spear and Jackhammer, WCW had a brave new Champion. Goldberg became champion the old-fashioned way: He earned it.

HOOPS AND HATRED: As significant as Goldberg's title victory was, the main event at Bash at the Beach might have been the biggest ever: Diamond Dallas Page and Karl Malone against Hollywood Hogan and Dennis Rodman. Amazingly, both Rodman and the "Mailman" gave sterling performances as wrestlers, and the match was much more balanced than anyone could have imagined. In fact, Malone wrestled with the same fury he displays as the star forward of the Utah Jazz, bashing the heads of





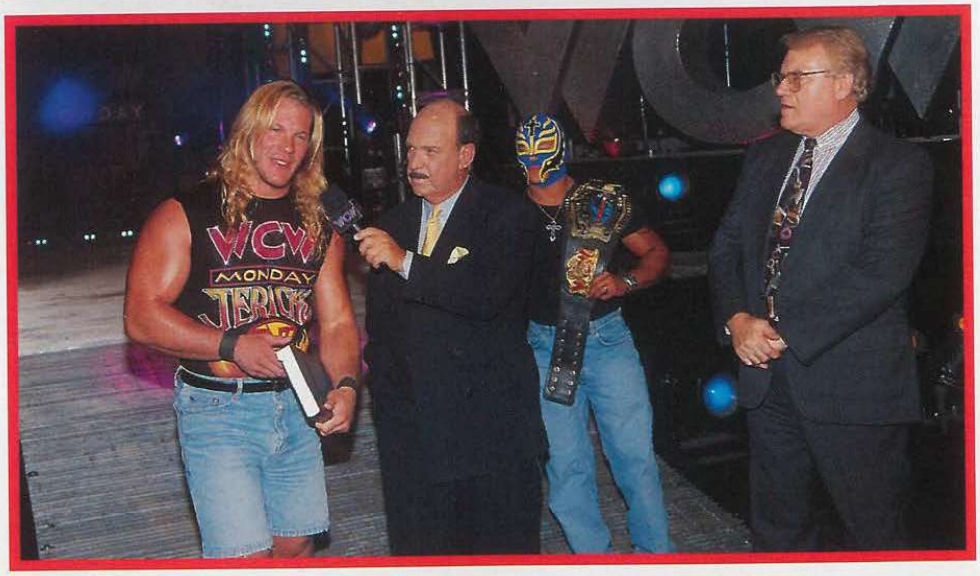


BAGWELL'S BLUFF: On July 6th, a wheelchair-bound Buff Bagwell appeared on Nitro accompanied by his mother, Judy. He thanked the fans profusely for all the get-well wishes during his convalescence from his serious neck and spine injuries, and was rewarded for his heartfelt, emotional speech with a standing ovation from a sold-out crowd. The next week, however, the unthinkable occurred. Bagwell returned, but was pushed out of his wheelchair by Hogan, who accused him of being a "cry baby" and implied that Bagwell was no longer tough enough for the nWo Hollywood. However, just seven days later, Bagwell called out Rick Steiner to say he had no hard feelings about the injury. Rick was brutally attacked by Scott Steiner, then Bagwell got out of his wheelchair to beg Scott to stop the beating ... only to continue the attack himself! One arrogant muscle pose later, it was clear that Buff Bagwell was playing us all for suckers. No wrestler has ever played with the good intentions of the fans as much! Bagwell then spent much of the latter half of 1998 being a pest during Scott Steiner's bouts.

TAG TURMOIL: Giant & Scott Hall defeated Sting & Kevin Nash for the World Tag Team title, after Sting had won the belts in a singles match against his former-partner and chosen Nash as Giant's replacement. The constant switching of partners during 1998 turned the entire tag scene into a confusing mess, something Eric Bischoff had engineered, so he could retire the tag team belts. Little wonder that in 1999, returning Commissioner J.J. Dillon announced a tournament to determine new, official WCW Tag Team Champions.

JULY JAMS

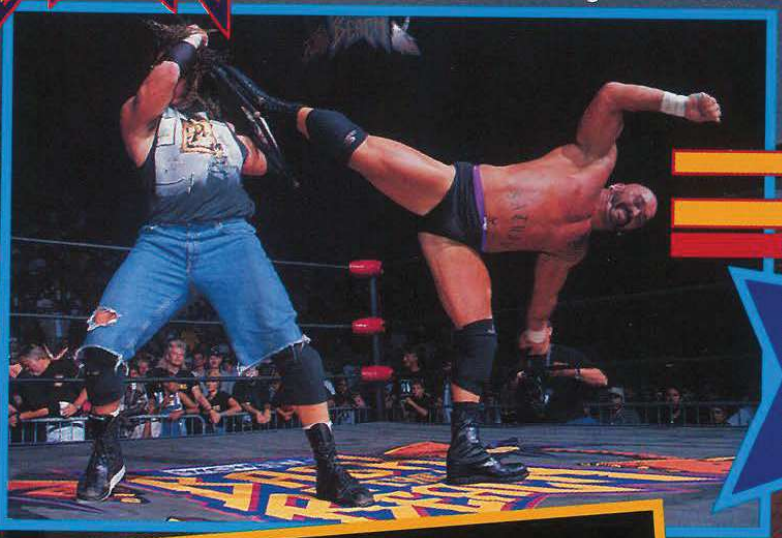
Eddy Guerrero bested Chavo Guerrero Jr. in a wild hair vs. hair encounter at the Bash, but the wacky Chavo didn't seem to mind, even grabbing the shears and cutting his own mane ... Curt Hennig scored a tainted pinfall win over Lex Luger by using outside interference by Rick Rude ... Giant blasted Kevin Greene at the Bash ... The thrilling Rey Mysterio, Jr. defeated Chris Jericho for the Cruiserweight title at the Bash in a decision that was later overturned ... Nash talked candidly about his relationship with Scott Hall ... A record-breaking crowd of over 41,500 fans attended the Atlanta Nitro ... Was Bret Hart really Sting's friend? ... Chris Benoit and Steve McMichael began using the famous Horseman hand signal as fans began chanting "We want Flair!"



WCW/nWo Bash at the Beach

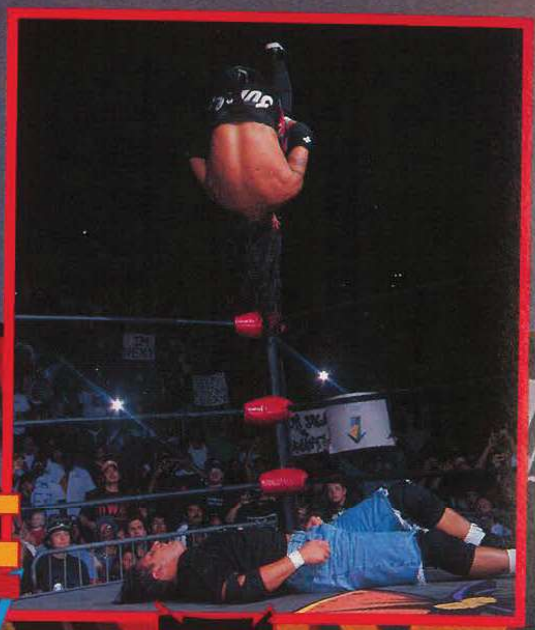
July 12, 1998 - San Diego, CA

This year's Bash at the Beach was a veritable "Who's Who" of athletes from both the basketball and football worlds, as well as the brightest stars from pro wrestling. Goldberg, six days into his World Heavyweight Championship reign, wrestled his first opponent, a determined Curt Hennig. Dennis "Rodzilla" Rodman & Hollywood Hogan teamed up against "Mailman" Karl Malone & Diamond Dallas Page, while Kevin Greene tackled Giant. We also saw the return of Rey Mysterio, Jr. and a Guerrero Hair vs. Hair match that ended in "typical Chavo style." This event was pure excitement from match one until the dual main events and kept the thousands of fans in the arena on their feet and the millions at home on the edge of their seats.



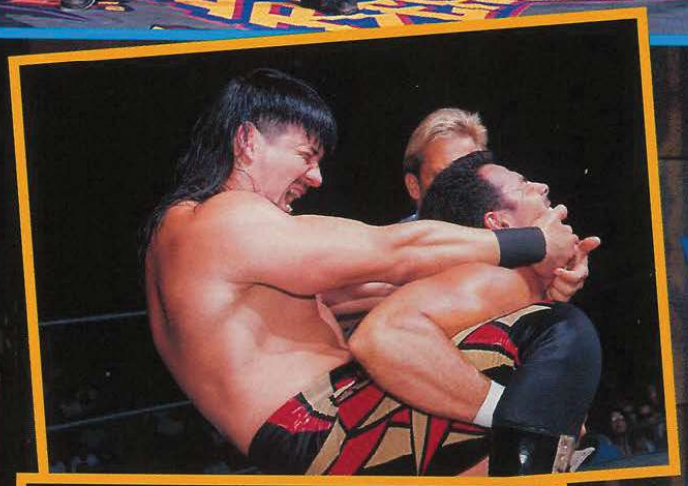
RAVEN
beat
SATURN
GRUDGE MATCH

Raven scored yet another illegal victory in a grudge match tainted by outside shenanigans by Lodi, Riggs, and a confused Kanyon. (10:37)



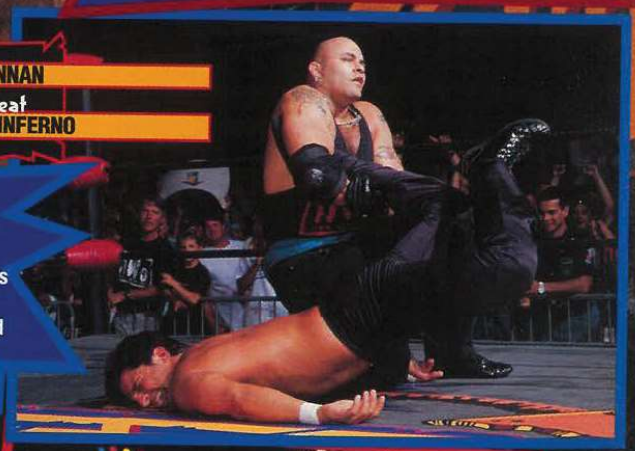
JUVENTUD GUERRERA
beat
KIDMAN

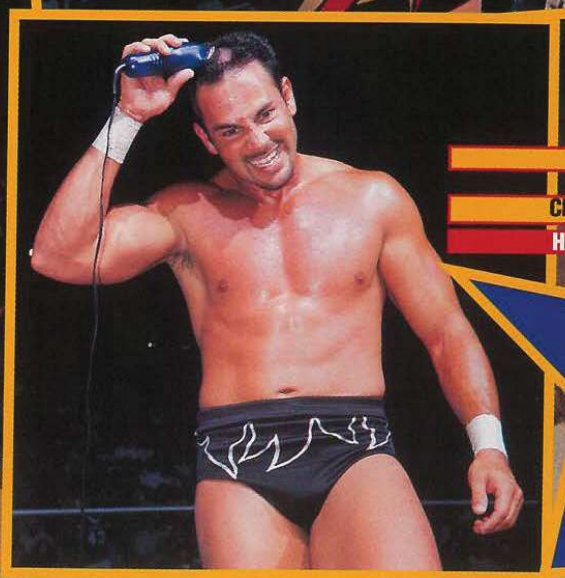
Kidman was a rapidly improving Cruiserweight, but his head was still full of Flock-inspired garbage, the biggest piece of which, Lodi, was stationed at ringside. None of that helped as Guerrera scored the victory in an exciting, fast-paced encounter. (9:56)



KONNAN
beat
DISCO INFERNO

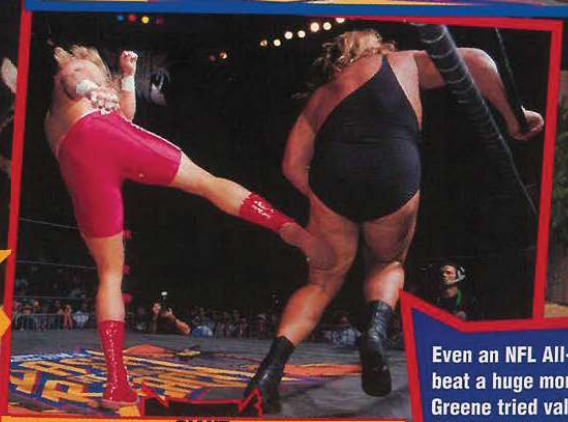
Konnan proved it was the night the music died as he captured Disco in his Tequila Sunrise — after Kevin Nash had power bombed him. (2:15)





EDDY GUERRERO
beat
CHAVO GUERRERO, JR.
HAIR VS. HAIR MATCH

Chavo was actually crazy like a fox, as he was rested and ready for his encounter against Eddy. However, Eddy scored the roll-up pinfall, but was disgusted as Chavo grabbed the electric clippers and shaved his own head with glee! (11:56)

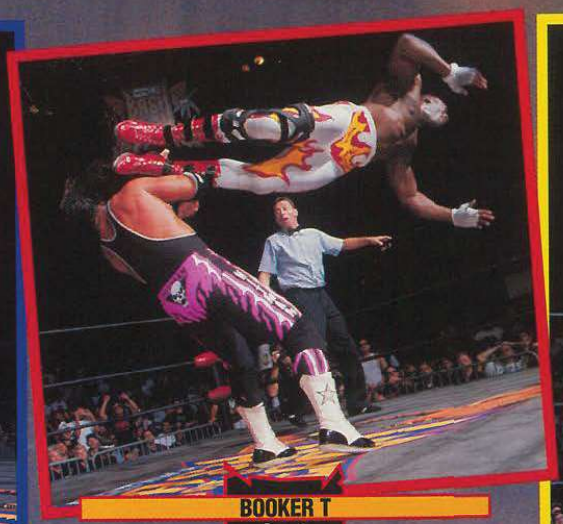


GIANT
beat
KEVIN GREENE
SPECIAL CHALLENGE MATCH

Even an NFL All-Pro can't beat a huge monster! Greene tried valiantly, but Giant was just too big and too powerful. (6:58)

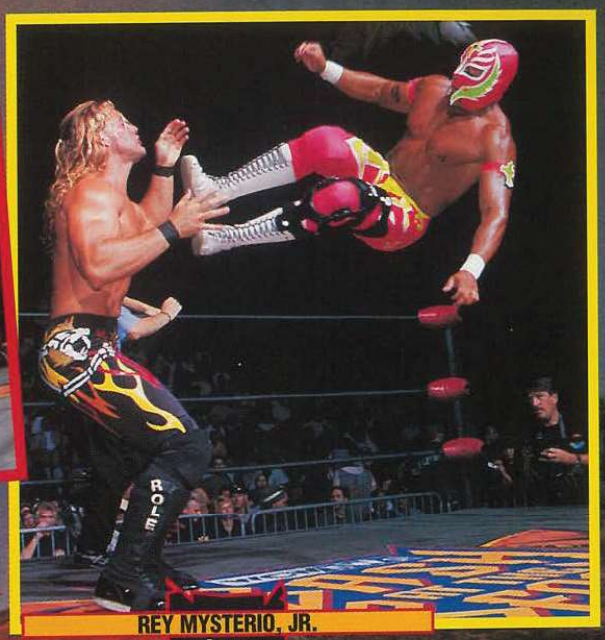
STEVIE RAY
beat
CHAVO GUERRERO, JR.

This match has been signed before Chavo had challenged Eddy Guerrero for the next "hair vs. hair" bout. Chavo totally gave up as he submitted to Stevie's handshake! (1:51)



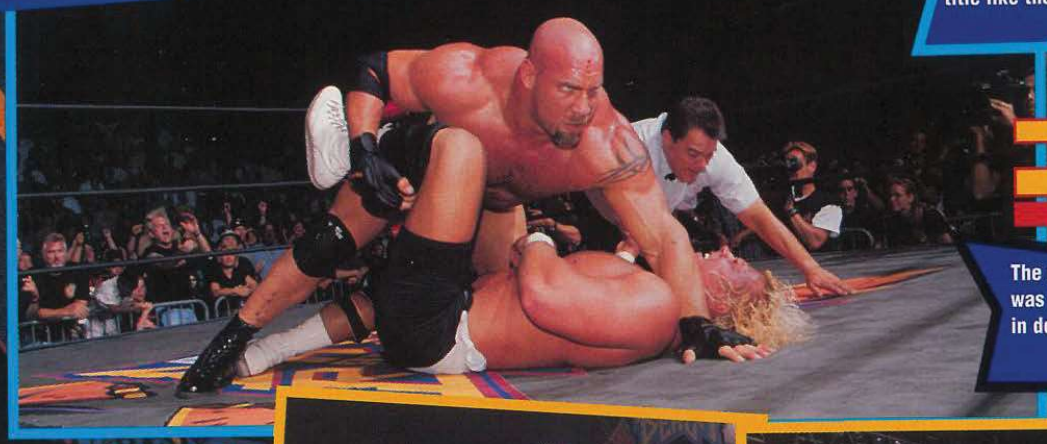
BOOKER T
beat
BRET "HITMAN" HART
WORLD TELEVISION TITLE MATCH

Hart lost by disqualification after he repeatedly blasted TV Champion Booker T with a chair, a frightening portent of the savagery that the "Hitman" would display as the year progressed. (8:29)



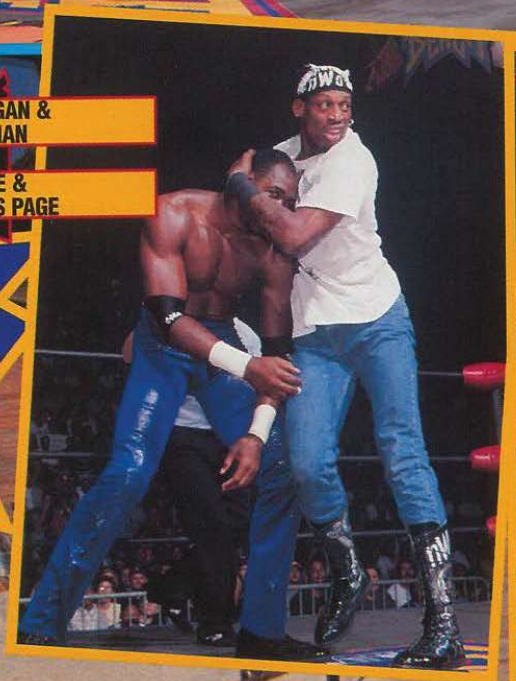
REY MYSTERIO, JR.
beat
CHRIS JERICHO
CRUISERWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

The returning Mysterio came back in grand style, downing Jericho for the Cruiserweight title like the luchador legend he is! (7:16)



GOLDBERG
beat
CURT HENNIG
WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

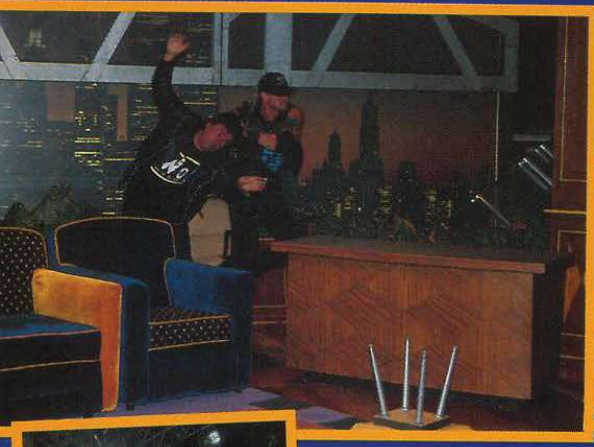
The new World Champion proved why he was undefeated as he gave Hennig a lesson in domination! (3:52)

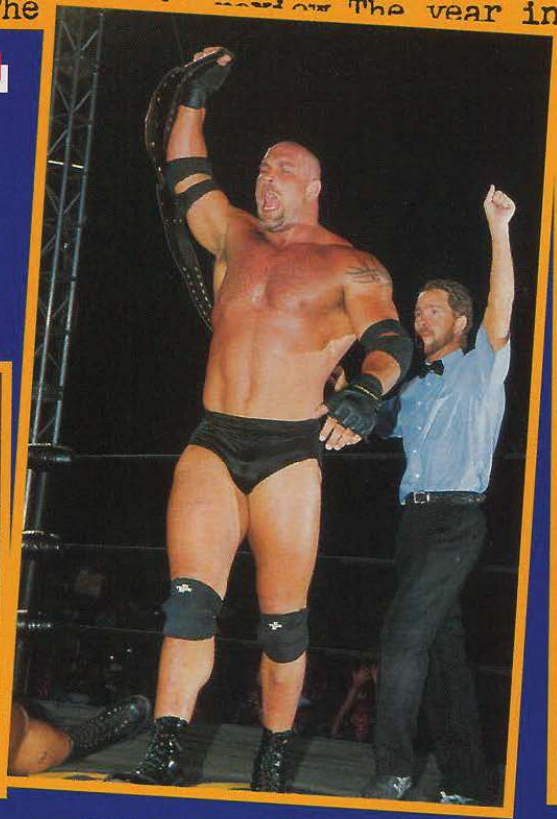


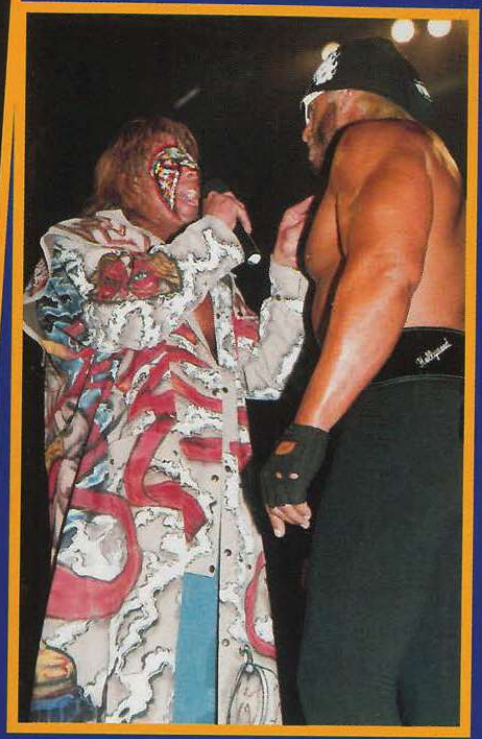
HOLLYWOOD HOGAN & DENNIS RODMAN
beat
KARL MALONE & DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

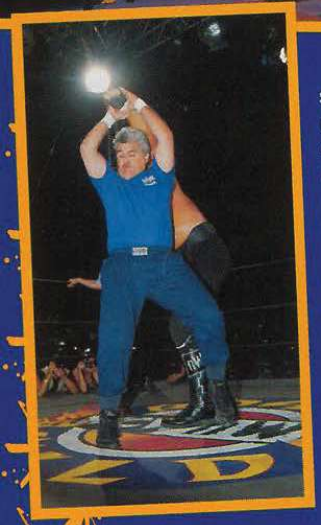
The whole world watched as the NBA stars joined WCW's best, but it was outside interference by the Disciple that spelled the difference as the Black & White celebrated their huge victory. (23:45)

AUGUST









TONIGHT, TONIGHT: It all started when Jay Leno, host of NBC's *The Tonight Show*, started telling jokes about Hollywood Hogan during the top-rated late-night gabfest, when it was brought to his attention that Eric Bischoff was ripping off his set and monologue on WCW telecasts. The real problems, however, erupted when Hogan and Bischoff actually took over *The Tonight Show*, driving Leno and band leader Kevin Eubanks from the set for a short time before security, assisted by Diamond Dallas Page, restored order. It was Page who came up with this brainstorm: Why not team Page and Leno to go against Bischoff and Hogan at Road Wild, since Leno was already a biking enthusiast? The match was made, and DDP began training Leno to get him in shape for the big fight. All the training paid off, as Leno was aggressive and confident in the ring, even taking a swipe at Hogan. Late in the bout, while the referee's back was turned, Eubanks entered the ring and executed a perfect Diamond Cutter on Bischoff, allowing Leno to make the pin. Hogan attacked Leno after the pinfall, but Goldberg ran to the ring and took out Hogan and Bischoff with a spear. It was a great victory that thrilled both WCW and television fans all over the globe.

GOLDBERG'S ROYAL VICTORY: Put a bunch of Wolfpac stalwarts and Black & White thugs in the ring, and add one Goldberg. What do you get? Just another day at the office for the then-World champion, who, in typical fashion, dominated the competition to raise his record to an incredible 130-0. The other wrestlers? Superstars Scott Hall, Giant, Curt Hennig, Scott Norton, Kevin Nash, Sting, Konnan, and Lex Luger. The victory was even more impressive when you consider that Goldberg Speared and Jackhammered Giant for the win in under eight minutes. It was another clear-cut victory for the man whose name fans couldn't stop chanting.

JERICHO GETS "SECURE": It was around this point in time when "LionHeart" Chris Jericho, convinced he was constantly the victim of a conspiracy (particularly after his crushing Cruiserweight title loss to Juventud Guerrera at Road Wild), started to hire his own "security officers" to accompany him to the ring. In actuality, these were three of the most motley sorts you could ever imagine, the types who couldn't prevent chapped lips. Two faded from the scene, but the biggest, burliest, and most ineffective "security agent," a portly old-timer called Ralphus, remained by Jericho's side. During August, Jericho defeated Stevie Ray (who was substituting for his injured brother) for the TV title — and managed to hold on to the belt for his longest reign yet.

WAY OF THE WARRIOR: Unexpectedly, Warrior returned to wrestling, making his WCW debut. Immediately, Warrior challenged Hogan in the ring (Hogan's initial response: "I thought he was dead!") and formed a new alliance called the One Warrior Nation. Everywhere he looked, Hogan seemed hounded by Warrior, who had an uncanny way of making ring entrances and exits in a cloud of smoke. It would not be long before the world would see the rematch between Hogan and Warrior ... only eight years in the making!

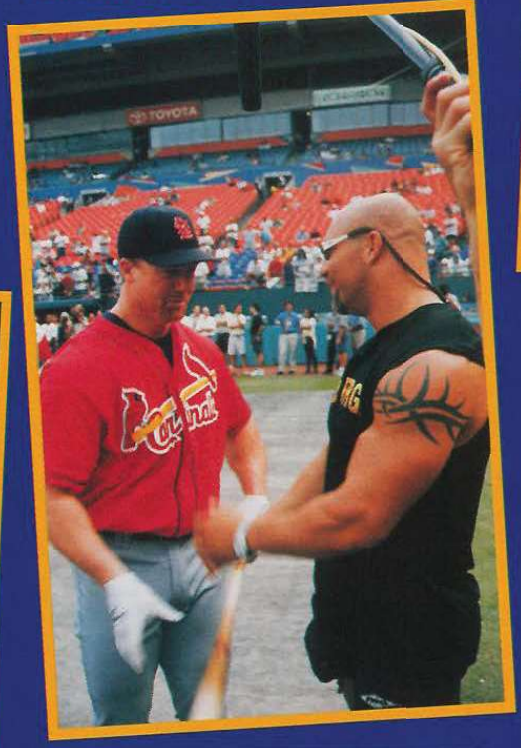
K-DOGG CAN DO: He's rowdy rowdy, and the fans can't seem to get enough of him. After toiling as one of WCW's most overlooked competitors, Konnan finally gained ground as one of its most popular athletes ever. Proud to be draped in the colors of the Wolfpac, K-Dogg became the enforcer of the organization, taking on anyone and everyone, while easily making his way up the ranks. Soon, Konnan was in title contention, but with or without a belt, fans couldn't get enough of this Mexican superstar and his colorful, florid pre-match chants.

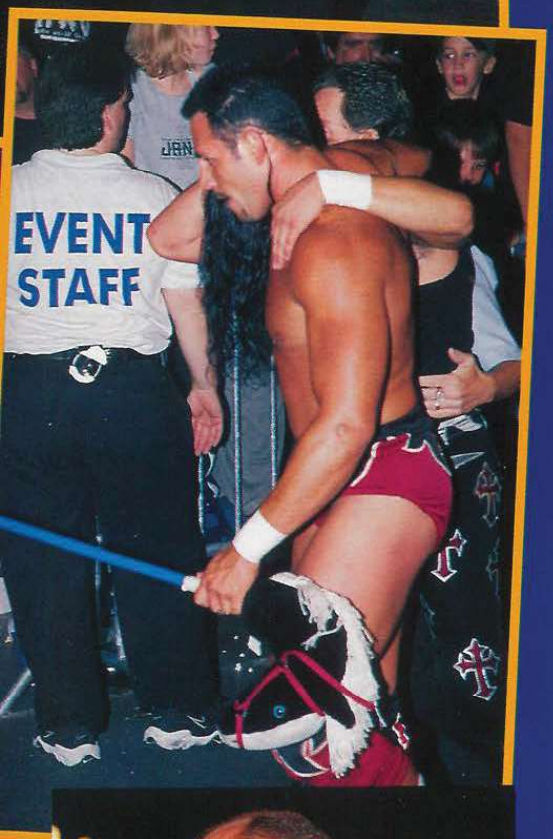
HOOVES ON THE HORIZON: Malenko admitted that he always lusted to become a member of the Four Horsemen, and wondered if Anderson wanted to re-form the legendary fighting group. Both Chris Benoit and Steve McMichael seemed eager to do it as well. Everyone was ... except Anderson, who shook off the idea since his neck surgery ended his career. Anderson's plea to Malenko to "let it go" was one of the most emotional moments in televised wrestling history.

AUGUST AMBLINGS

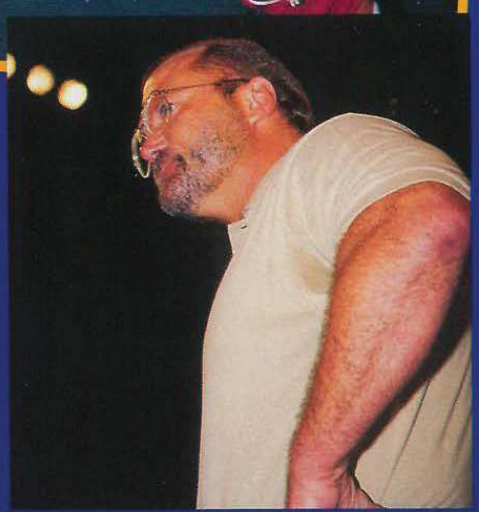
Chavo Guerrero, Jr. seemed to get further and further "out there" during the summer when he started bringing his wooden hobby horse, Pepe, to the ring with him. Scarier was the fact that he engaged in long conversations with it ... Disco Inferno

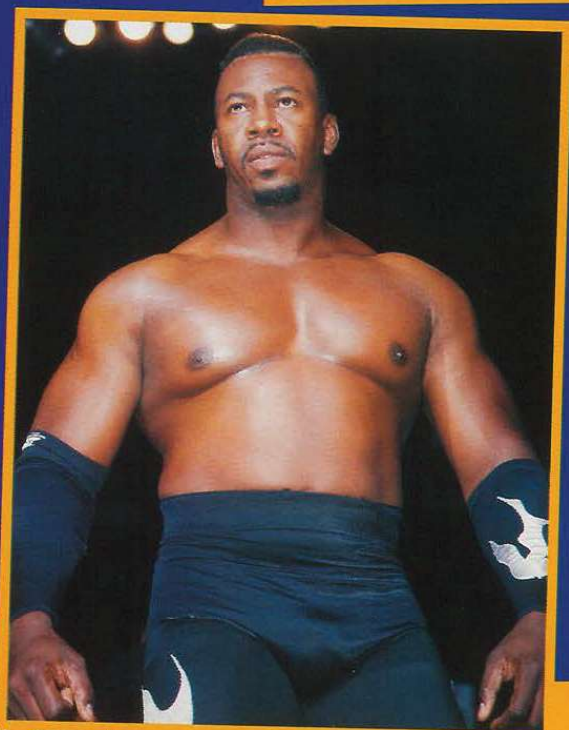
and Alex Wright were actually quite a successful tag team ... Chad Fortune and Dale Torborg, The Pit Crew, began their WCW careers ... Bill Goldberg met new home run king Mark McGwire August 31st at Florida's Pro Player Stadium ... Injured or not? Scott Steiner got out of his match against his brother Rick at Road Wild by claiming he was too seriously hurt to compete due to a run in with a chair-swinging Rick several nights earlier ... Stevie Ray shocked just about everyone by joining nWo Hollywood ... Travis Tritt played live on the Road Wild Pay-Per-





View ... Wrath returned from an injury with newfound desire and determination. In fact, he started an undefeated streak not unlike Goldberg's that went into the double-digits ... Lex Luger beat Bret Hart for the U.S. title, but Hart regained the belt just three days later ... A series of misunderstandings left Goldberg and Nash's friendship in tatters ... Rick Martel announced his retirement ... Eddy Guerrero rebelled against Bischoff's tyranny.

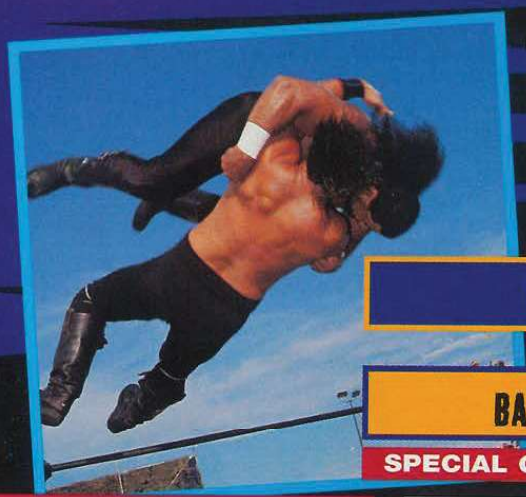




ROAD WILD

August 8, 1998 - Sturgis, SD

The annual Sturgis Rally and Races has become the home for Road Wild for the past three years. Headlining this huge outdoor event was *The Tonight Show* host Jay Leno with his band leader Kevin Eubanks alongside Diamond Dallas Page against the wannabe late night talk show host Eric Bischoff & Hollywood Hogan with the Disciple. We also saw a Battle Royal between nWo Hollywood, the Wolfpac and Bill Goldberg, as well as a breath-taking, high-flying Cruiserweight title match between the champ Chris Jericho and Juventud Guerrera. Taking that match to another level of excitement was the special referee: Dean Malenko. Adding mayhem to the evening was a brutal triangle match that pushed pro wrestling to the limits! The excitement of the evening roared through the Black Hills and into our homes as Road Wild '98 gave us over three non-stop hours of wrestling action.



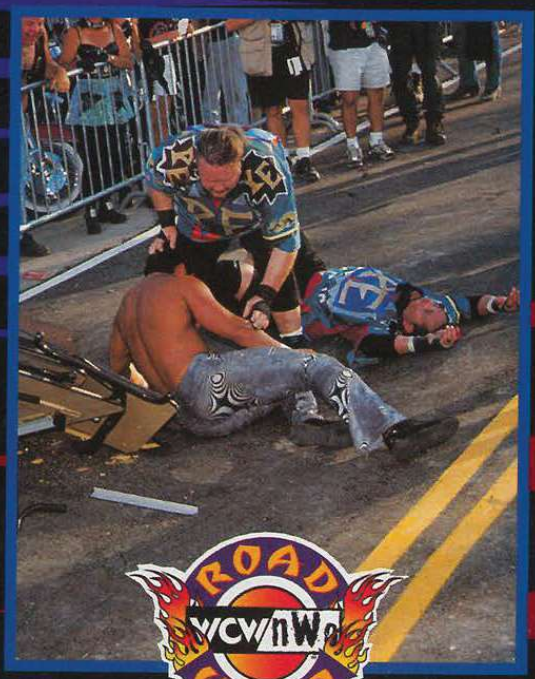
Meng scored the victory with his Tongan death grip, but post-bout anarchy by Jimmy Hart, Hugh Morrus, and Barbarian caused a wild fracas. Thank goodness for Hacksaw Jim Duggan, who cleared the ring with his 2x4. (4:49)

MENG

beat

BARBARIAN

SPECIAL GRUDGE MATCH

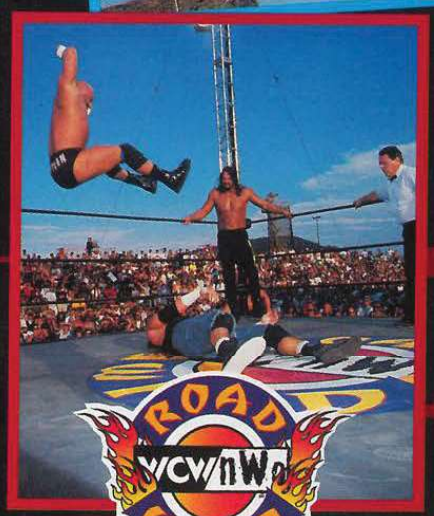


PUBLIC ENEMY

beat

DISCO INFERNO & ALEX WRIGHT

The Dancing Fools learned not to get into a street fight with two South Philly brawlers, and their intern, Tokyo Magnum, learned that same, painful lesson as well. (15:27)



SATURN

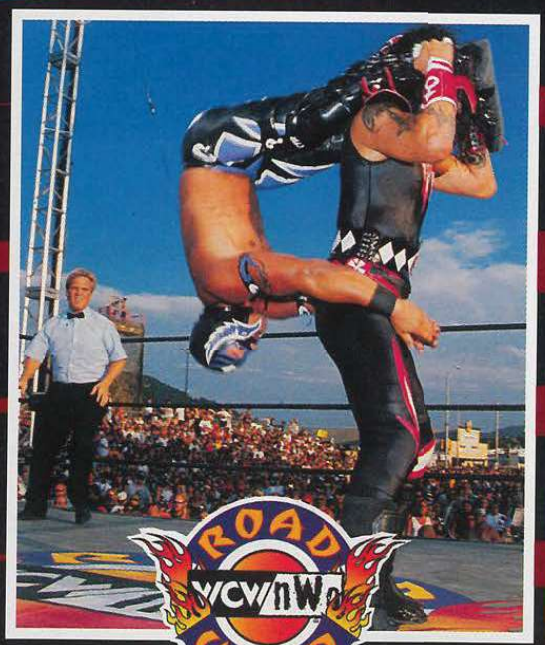
beat

RAVEN

&

KANYON

Falls counted anywhere in this Triangle match that saw Saturn score the pinfall despite loads of interference by Flock members. (12:26)

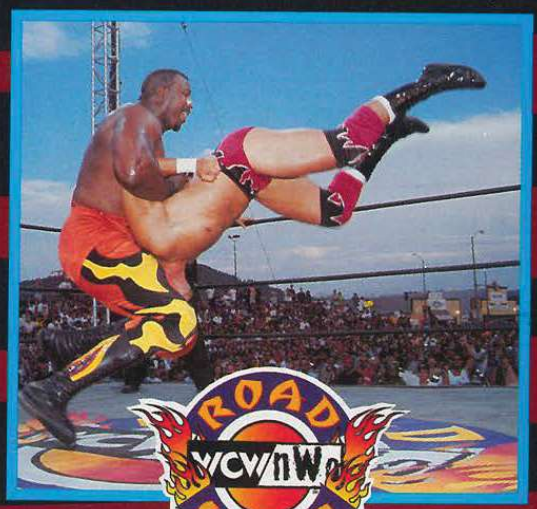


REY MYSTERIO, JR.

beat

PSYCHOSIS

In a bout where the winner earned a shot at the Cruiserweight title, Mysterio once again proved why he's one of the greatest high-flyers ever. (13:21)



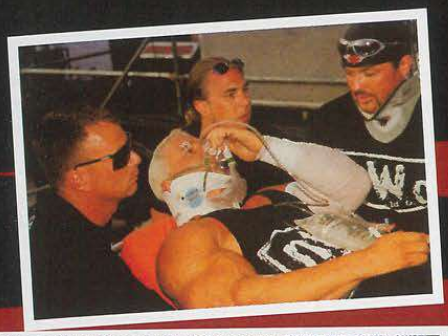
STEVIE RAY

beat

CHAVO GUERRERO, Jr.

"WORLD TELEVISION CHAMPIONSHIP?"

Both men claimed to be TV Champ, but the real owner, Booker T, was laid up with a knee injury. Angered, Stevie Ray slapjacked Chavo for a quick pin. Amazingly, Eddy Guerrero prevented a brutal beating of Chavo by Stevie after the pinfall. (2:38)

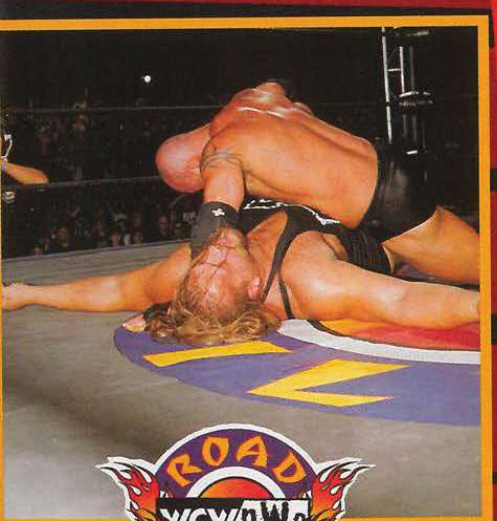


RICK STEINER

match postponed

SCOTT STEINER

We will say it even if no one else will: Scott Steiner chickened out as he was wheeled out on a gurney by Buff Bagwell claiming to be too injured to wrestle. J.J. Dillon ordered Scott to wrestle Rick at Fall Brawl or be banned from WCW for life! (MATCH POSTPONED)



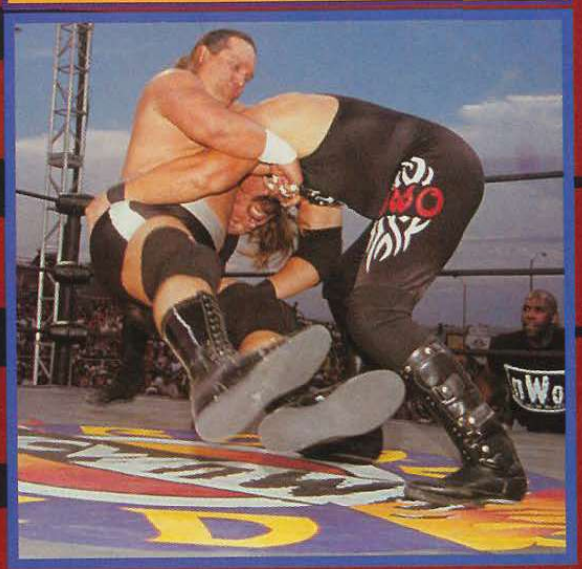
NINE-MAN BATTLE ROYAL

Even the nWo and Wolfpac's best wouldn't stop Goldberg from this thrilling win — not even Giant, who was Jackhammered and pinned! (7:57)

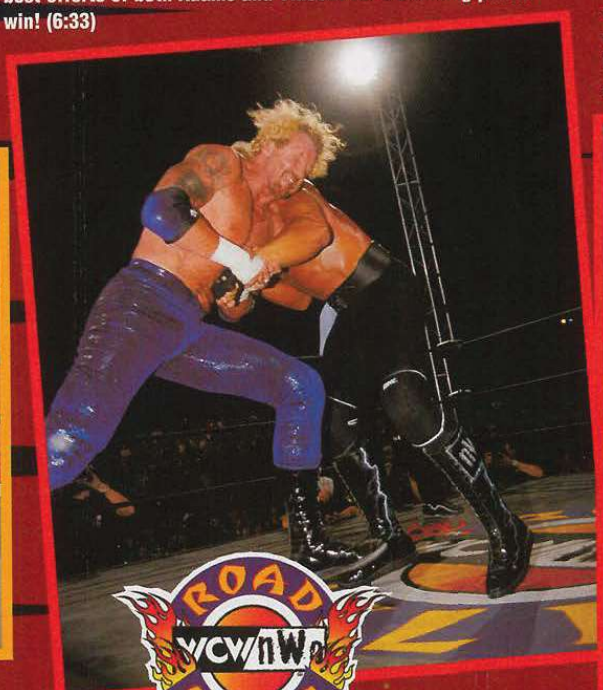
STEVE McMICHAEL

beat

BRIAN ADAMS



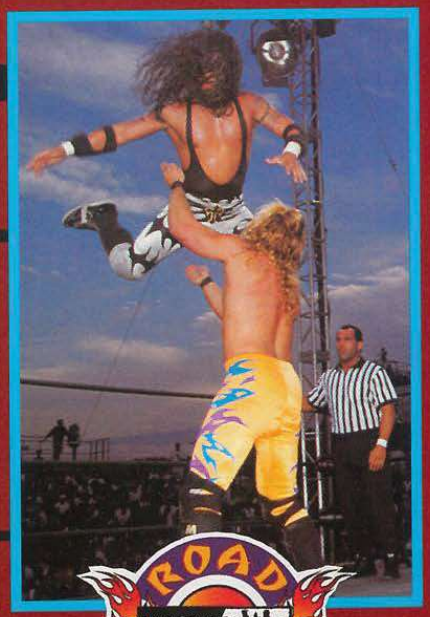
This was a huge victory for WCW as "Mongo" thwarted the best efforts of both Adams and Vincent for a stunning pinfall win! (6:33)



JAY LENO & DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

beat

HOLLYWOOD HOGAN & ERIC BISCHOFF



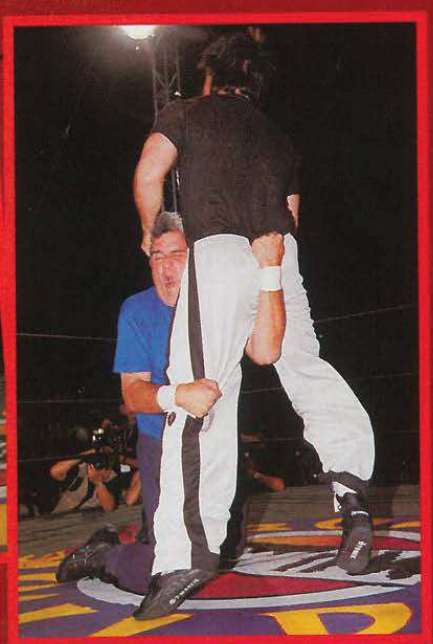
JUVENTUD GUERRERA

beat

CHRIS JERICHO

CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

Dean Malenko was special guest referee. Jericho was the Cruiserweight champion. Juvi got the best of the erstwhile "LionHeart" in this bout. A stirring victory in Sturgis for Juvi. (16:23)

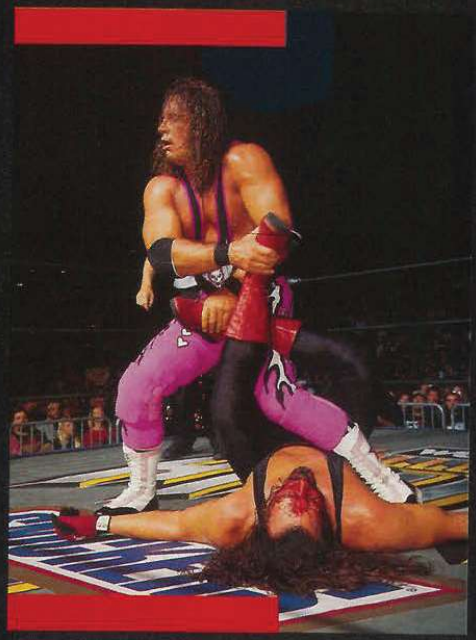


The whole world watched again and this time interference by *Tonight Show* bandleader Kevin Eubanks meant a huge victory for WCW fans around the globe! An exhausted but thrilled Leno and Page (and Goldberg, who speared both Hogan and Easy-E after the pin) exulted in victory after Leno covered Bischoff for the 1-2-3. (14:32)

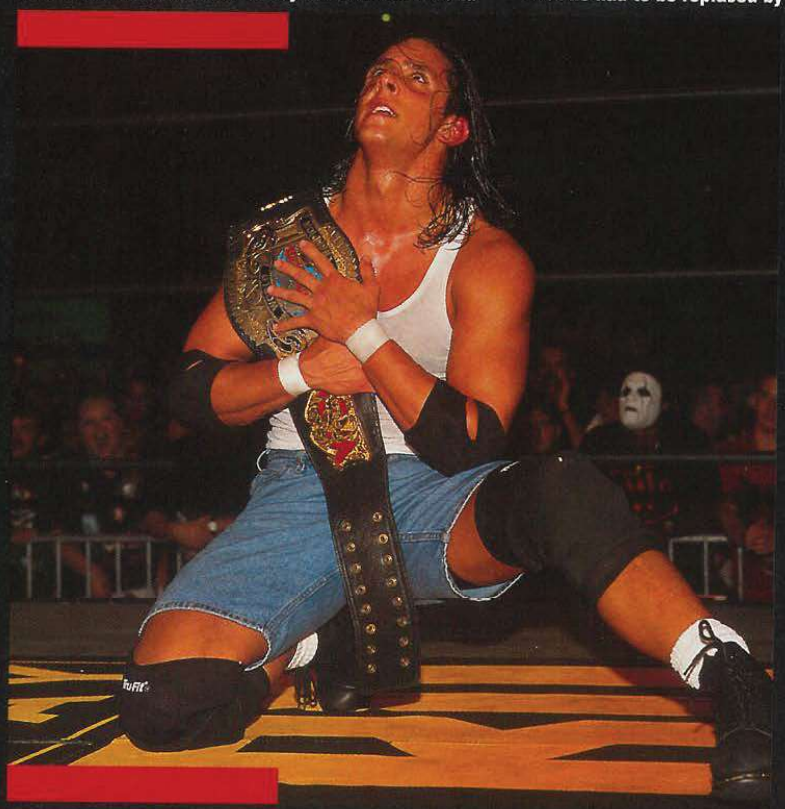
SEPTEMBER

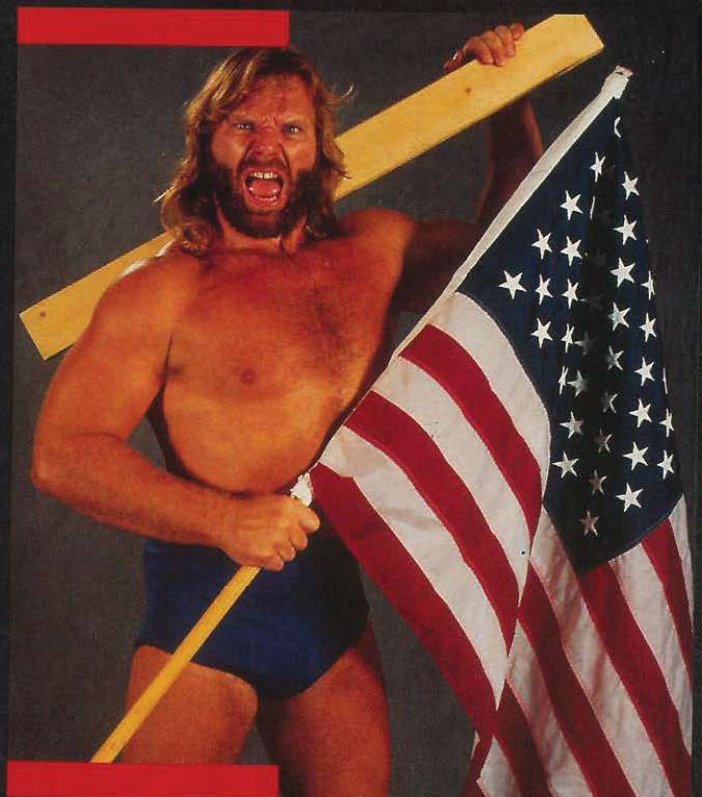
ANOTHER HART-BREAKER: For a while there, he seemed to have us all fooled again. Bret Hart seemed to be genuinely atoning for his previous sins, claiming that he had always admired Sting and that he'd do anything he could to "watch Sting's back." Hogan versus Hart was announced for a Nitro main event, but during the course of the bout, Hart seemed to be favoring his knee so much that Sting, Luger, and Konnan came to ringside with a stretcher and took Hart back to the dressing room. As Sting replaced Hart in the ring, Scott Steiner and Buff Bagwell, dressed as paramedics, attacked Luger and Konnan as Hart got up from the stretcher and limped his way back to the ring. As Sting had Hogan helpless in the Scorpion Deathlock, Hart DDT'd Sting! After bashing Sting's knee several times with a chair, the wounded Wolfpac made their way back to the ring, but the damage had already been done ... both to Sting's knee and to Hart's reputation. Would anyone ever be able to trust Bret again?

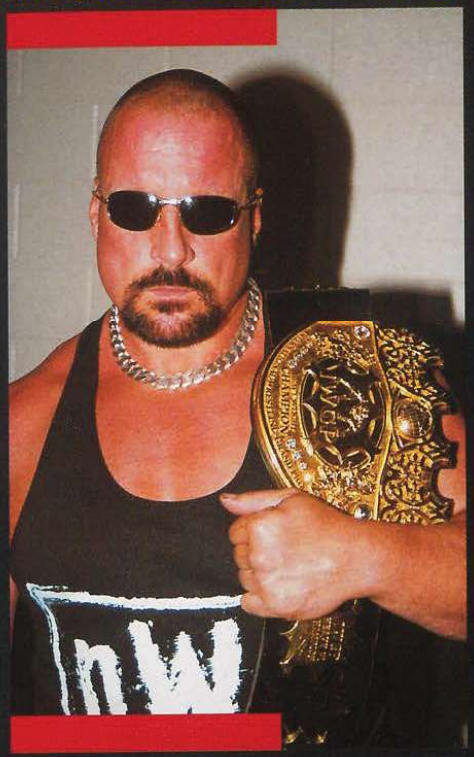
SATURN ENDS THE FLOCK: At Fall Brawl, the rules were simple. If Raven beat Saturn, Perry would have to rejoin The Flock and be at Raven's beck and call. But if Saturn upended Raven, The Flock members would be allowed to leave Raven's nefarious nest. Despite referee Mickey Jay being knocked out and outside interference by Lodi and Kanyon, Saturn was able to execute his Death Valley Driver on Raven and score the most important win of his rapidly improving WCW career. Not only that, but it meant that Kidman, Lodi (who didn't want to go), Riggs, Sick Boy, and the rest of The Flock were now able to call their own shots. It didn't take long for the emancipation to affect one of The Flock's stars, as the very next night on Nitro, Kidman defeated Juventud Guerrera for the Cruiserweight title.

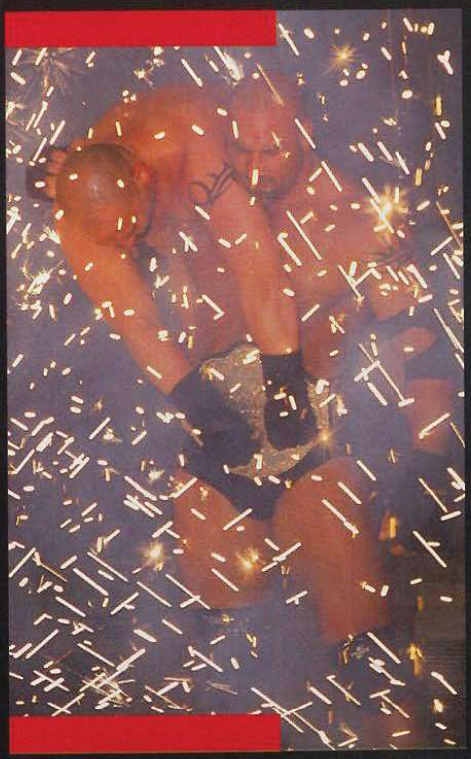


HALL'S FALL: It started with a sudden nWo thirst for beverages. The partying ended soon enough, except for Scott Hall, who was apparently watching his career get flushed away by an apparent love of alcohol. During one memorable Nitro appearance, Hall seemed so out of sorts during a tag team match that he had to be replaced by Stevie Ray. In another,









even Wolfpac members seemed to be concerned with Hall's well-being, particularly Kevin Nash, Hall's former Outsiders tag team partner, who watched in horror as Hall vomited all over the Nitro set (and Eric Bischoff!). A sad state of affairs or another nWo ruse?

WAR GAMES: Three teams were involved in the 1998 edition of War Games: Team WCW, which consisted of Roddy Piper, Diamond Dallas Page, and Warrior; Team Wolfpac, comprised of Sting, Lex Luger, and Kevin Nash; and Team nWo Hollywood, which featured Bret Hart, Stevie Ray, and Hollywood Hogan. The winner, the man who made the pinfall, would go on to a Championship match against Goldberg at Halloween Havoc. Against all odds, Page proved his greatness by pinning Stevie following a Diamond Cutter. During the match, Warrior did everything he could, to get at Hogan, including kicking the fence right out of the cage, but that would have to wait until Halloween Havoc.

THANK YOU HACKSAW: There wasn't a dry eye in the house, when Hacksaw Jim Duggan announced his retirement at a TV taping in Mobile on September 8th. Hacksaw had been diagnosed with cancer of the kidney and underwent surgery two days later.

HORSEMEN HISTORY: The biggest night anyone could imagine was Flair's emotional return to WCW on September 14th, in Greenville, SC complete with the reformation of the Four Horsemen: "Mongo" McMichael, Chris Benoit, Dean Malenko, and Arn Anderson. In the end, things ended up with Flair raging at Bischoff, calling him every name in the book and accusing Bischoff of "abuse of power." In any event, the Horsemen were back and the fans were thrilled to have them.

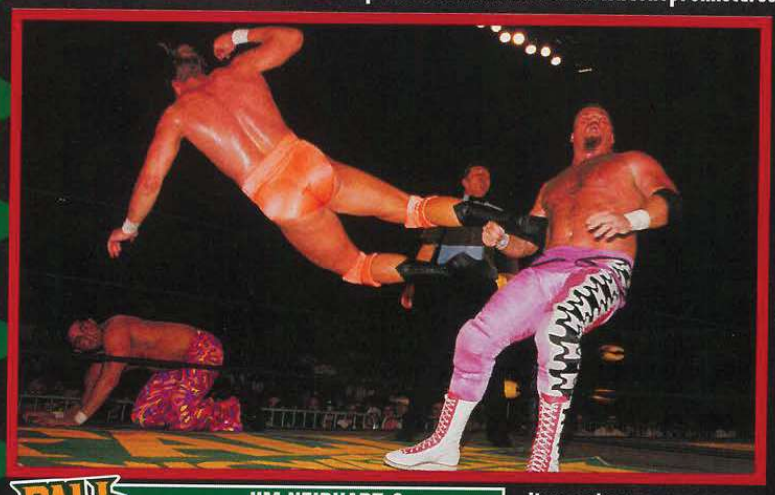
SEPTEMBER SONGS

Chris Jericho angered just about everyone by taking on a fake, diminutive Goldberg at Fall Brawl ... Wrath became unstoppable ... Van Hammer found peace and love ... Scott "Flash" Norton won the IWGP Heavyweight Championship on September 23rd in Yokohama, Japan ... "The Cat" Ernest Miller became as loud as he was successful, never letting anyone forget he is a three-time world karate champion ... Warrior's first (and only) recruit into the OWN was the Disciple, who turned against Hogan to become a solo competitor for a short time ... Before his loss to Kidman, Juventud Guerrera was spectacular in defending the Cruiserweight title ... Saturn "lost" to Lodi and had to do his bidding until Fall Brawl ... Villano IV was seriously injured during a match against Raven and Kanyon ... Chae, Fyre, Whisper, Kidman, Jericho, and Disco Inferno taped episodes of *The Dating Game*.

FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

September 13, 1998
Winston-Salem, NC

War Games '98 had a main event featuring a three-team match between WCW, nWo and the Wolfpac's brightest superstars. There was also a Cruiserweight title match; a brutal fight for possession of The Flock and a foreshadowing of things to come as ex-Horseman Arn Anderson aided Dean Malenko. Talk about a showstopper! Before the first match even began, Chris Jericho made it known that there would be a title vs. title match between himself and the Heavyweight Champion Goldberg on this very night. The crowd, and just about everyone else, was skeptical but Jericho DID deliver what he promised. Sort of.



FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

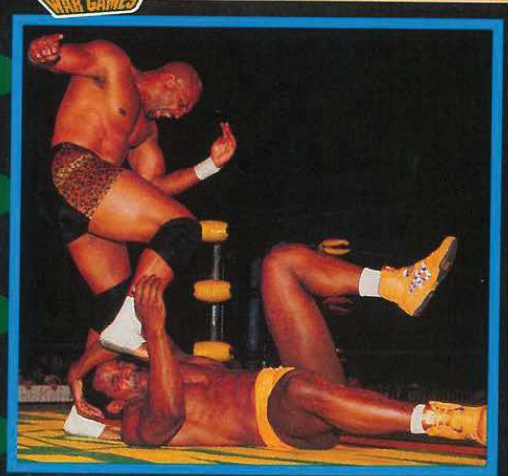
CHRIS JERICHO
Beat
"GOLDBERG"

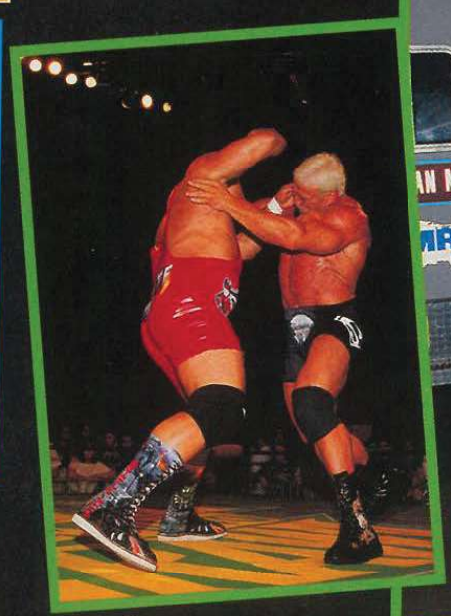
This wasn't Goldberg, but a short replica. Jericho, of course, dominated the imposter in the most disgusting tactic of the year. (1:15)

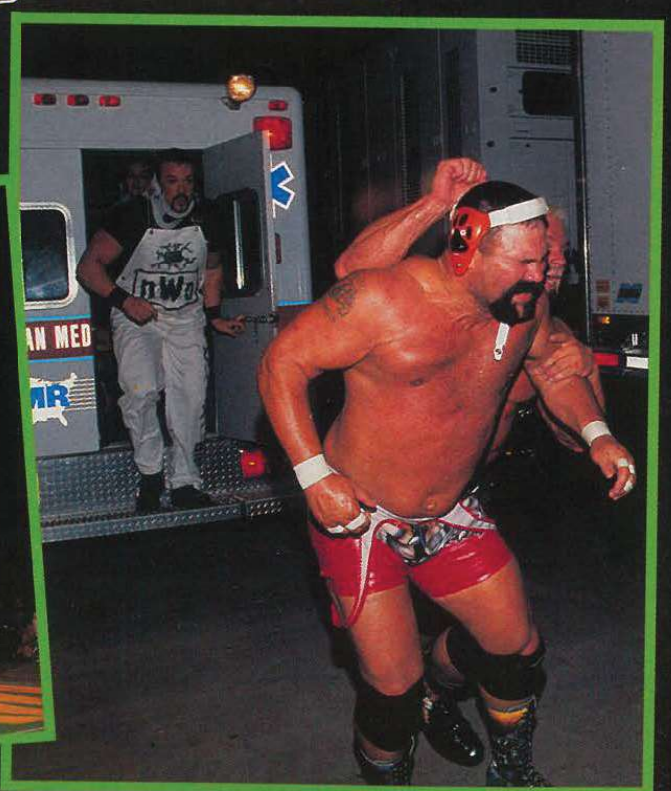
FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

JIM NEIDHART & THE BRITISH BULLDOG
Beat
DISCO INFERNO & ALEX WRIGHT

It was sheer power versus primpin' and dancin'. Alex and Disco collided, leading to a pinfall loss. Talk about four left feet. (11:03)







FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

"THE CAT"
Beat
NORMAN SMILEY

Ernest Miller said he was the greatest, and the three-time world karate champion proved he was at least very good with this victory over Smiley. (5:05)

FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

SCOTT STEINER
NO CONTEST
RICK STEINER

Just as disgusting as Jericho: Buff Bagwell pretended to re-injure his neck, causing the bout to be stopped and a no-contest ruled. In the back, Bagwell and Scott attacked Rick Steiner once again. This came after Scott had tried to get out of the match yet again! (5:30)

FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

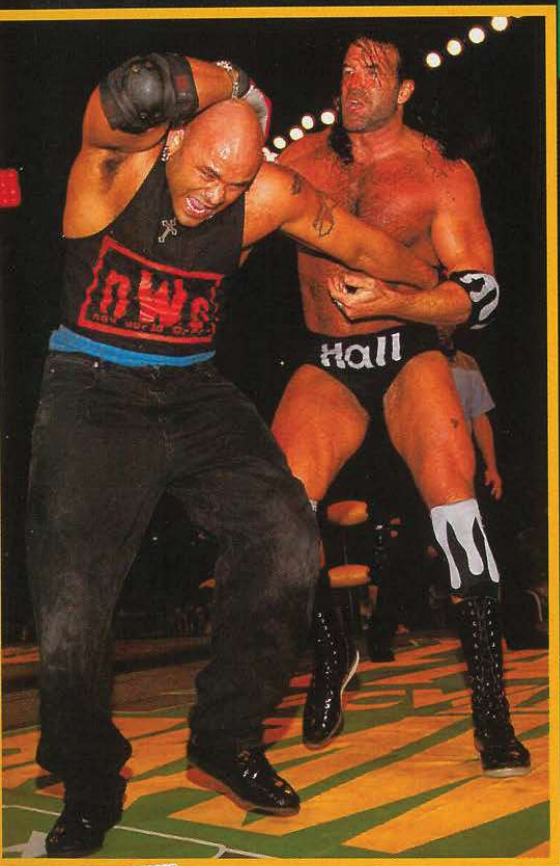
JUVENTUD GUERRERA

Beat

SILVER KING

CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH

The rapidly improving Silver King looked awesome, but Juvi scored a big win to retain his Cruiserweight title. (8:38)



FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

KONNAN

Beat

SCOTT HALL

The worrisome Hall couldn't keep his mind off his adult beverage, causing K-Dogg to score a victory with the Tequila Sunrise. How ironic! (12:03)

FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

SATURN

Beat

RAVEN w/ Lodi

Huge news: Thanks to a pre-match stipulation, Saturn won freedom for every member of The Flock with this huge victory! Raven was now deservedly a man alone. (14:04)

FALL BRAWL WCW/nWo WAR GAMES

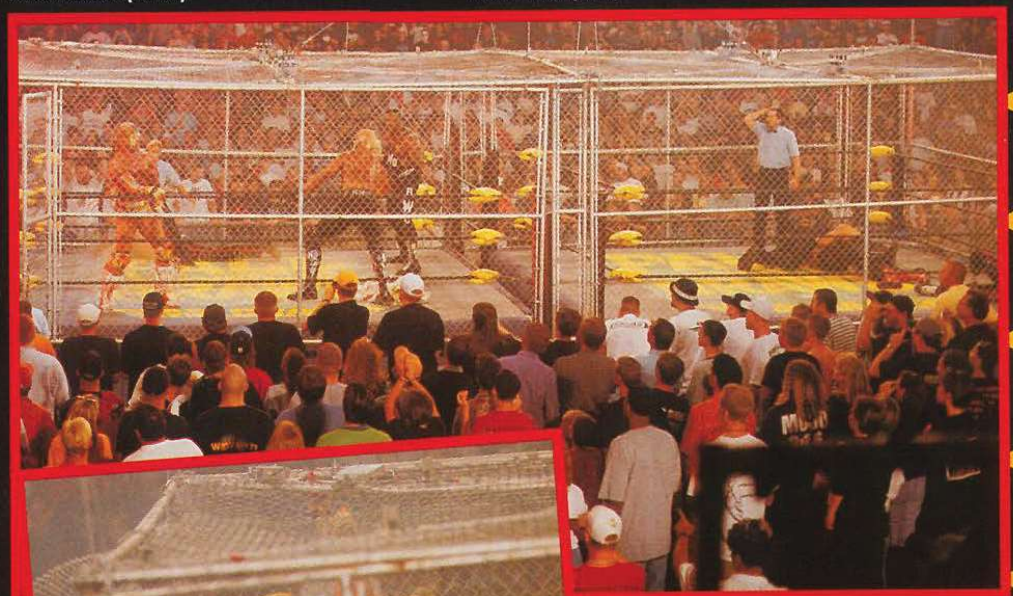
DEAN MALENKO

Beat

CURT HENNIG

GRUDGE MATCH

Rick Rude interfered as Malenko caught Hennig in a Texas Cloverleaf, causing a DQ. Rude and Hennig then beat the "Iceman" and Arn Anderson within an inch of their lives. (7:37)



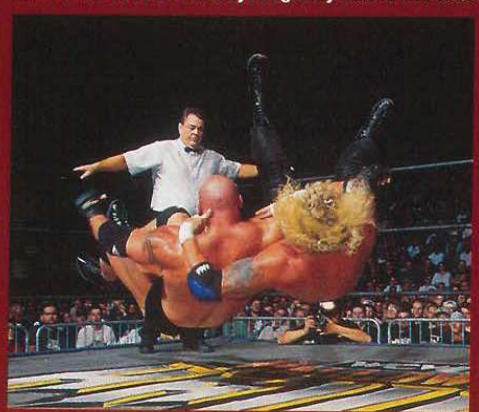
WAR GAMES

It was a thrill-a-minute as Diamond Dallas Page scored a pinfall over Stevie Ray to score the victory after more than 20 minutes of non-stop action — including Warrior's first WCW Pay-Per-View appearance. A bad night for the nWo, indeed! (20:06)

October

WARRIOR'S HALLOWEEN HORROR: Warrior claimed he was in WCW to destroy Hollywood Hogan, but unfortunately, his performance at Halloween Havoc was a real disappointment to anyone who wanted to be rid of Hogan once and for all. After eight years, Warrior finally had his chance against his avowed enemy, and he was doing everything he could to make every blow count. Even though he was able to cut Hogan's forehead severely and withstand interference by Giant, he wasn't able to put Hogan down for the count. Horace Hogan, who a few days earlier had been blasted by Hollywood as a "sacrifice" to the nWo, KO'd Warrior with a steel chair, allowing Hollywood to make the three-count. Horace doused Warrior with lighter fluid as Hogan reached for a match, but WCW officials rushed to the ring to prevent a Warrior flambé.

GOLDBERG BOES DALLAS: DDP finally beat Bret Hart for the U.S. title the day after Halloween Havoc, but his bout against Goldberg at Havoc was every bit as good of a performance. WCW's two most popular stars went at it with everything they had in the best



match of the year. When it ended, Goldberg was 155-0 and was viewed with higher esteem than ever, as was Page, who the very next night celebrated among the fans after scoring that clean pinfall on Hart, who now ranked at the top of many fans' most hated lists after his display of brutality against Sting at Havoc.

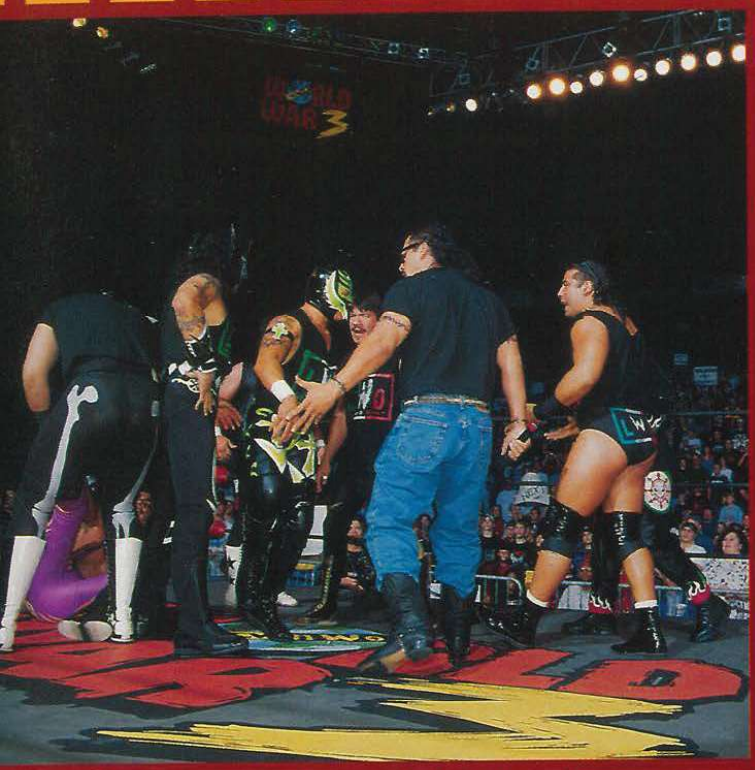
RICK STEINER'S GREATEST NIGHT: Another long-awaited bit of revenge came for Rick Steiner, whose brother, Scott, had tried every trick in the book to get out of facing him. The deal at Havoc was this: If Rick Steiner and his partner, Buff Bagwell, could defeat Scott Steiner and Giant for the Tag Team title, then Rick would get his shot against Scott. Buff had seemingly split from Scott after Big Poppa Pump had told Bagwell to ditch his own mother, but it was another Bagwell ruse: Marcus attacked Rick from behind just seconds into the bout. Amazingly, Rick battled back against these three foes, even pinning Giant following a bulldog! All alone, Rick had won the WCW World Tag Team titles, but he was a long way from being finished. He was able to deliver a top rope bulldog to his brother in the second match, scoring one of the greatest singles performances in WCW history. No wonder Scott avoided Rick for so long!

HALL BESTS NASH ... SORT OF: Finally, Scott Hall and Kevin Nash, the former Outsiders tag team partners who had been estranged for months, were facing each other one-on-one at Halloween Havoc. Hall wrestled shockingly well considering his infatuation with alcohol, but it was Nash's intention to teach his former friend a serious lesson. Nash seemed to offer no offense at all during the early part of the match, but he was just goading Hall into a false sense of confidence. Nash woke up and came on strong, eventually blasting Hall with two jarring Jackknife power bombs. However, instead of pinning Hall, Nash simply walked away from the ring, giving Hall the victory by countout ... as well as something to think about.

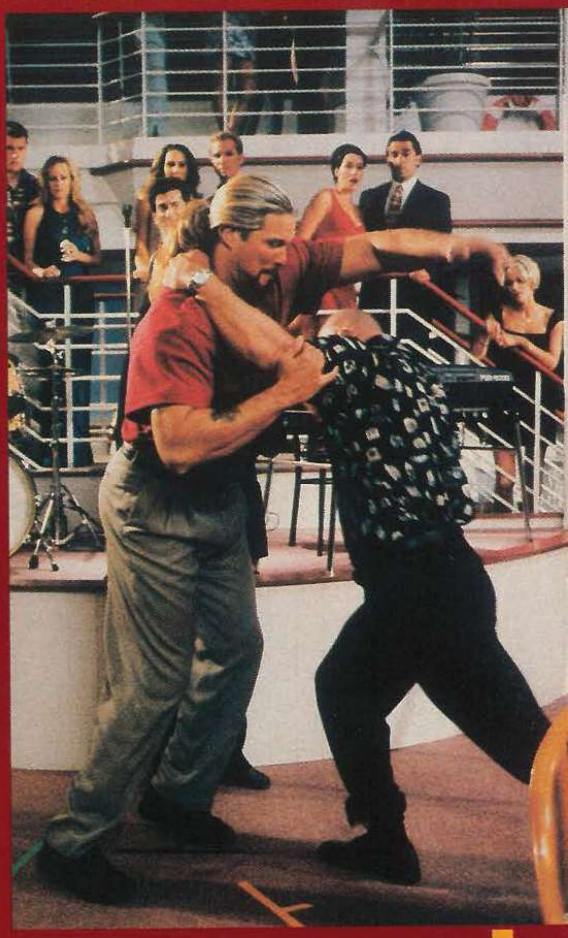
EDDY'S LWO: A few months back, Eddy Guerrero was one angry wrestler. He had even wheeled his luggage to the ring and announced that he was quitting WCW because of the lack of respect that Eric Bischoff had given him and many of the other Mexican stars. Undaunted, Eddy formed his own organization called the Latino World Order (LWO), and the recruiting began. Soon, the Hispanic stars started sporting LWO shirts: El Dandy, Silver King, Juventud Guerrera, Hector Garza, Damian, and Psychosis. Week after week, more and more of the luchadors began joining, as well as Eddy's nameless bodyguard. Chavo was refused membership and the one who resisted for the longest time was Rey Mysterio, Jr. who could see the LWO for what it was: Eddy was becoming the Hollywood Hogan of his new group, with the others doing his bidding and trying to protect his interests.

OCTOBER ALL OVER

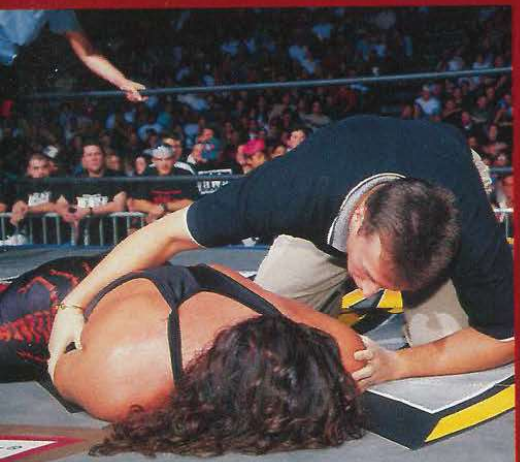
Judy Bagwell's most memorable appearance on Nitro was a hoot as she literally dragged her son, Buff, out of the arena by his ear ... Arn Anderson brought Reid Flair, Ric's youngest son, to the ring to confront Eric Bischoff about why WCW had fired Ric Flair, and Reid scored a few collegiate takedowns on the WCW President! ... Bret Hart displayed

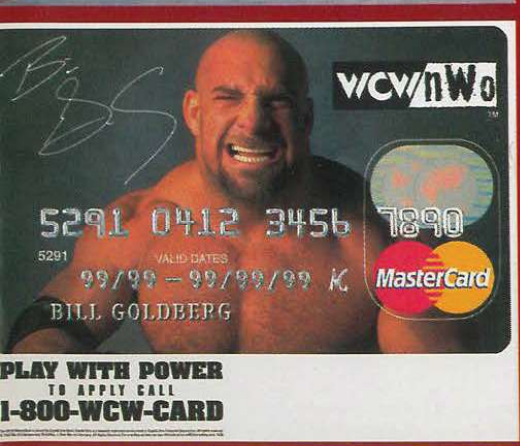


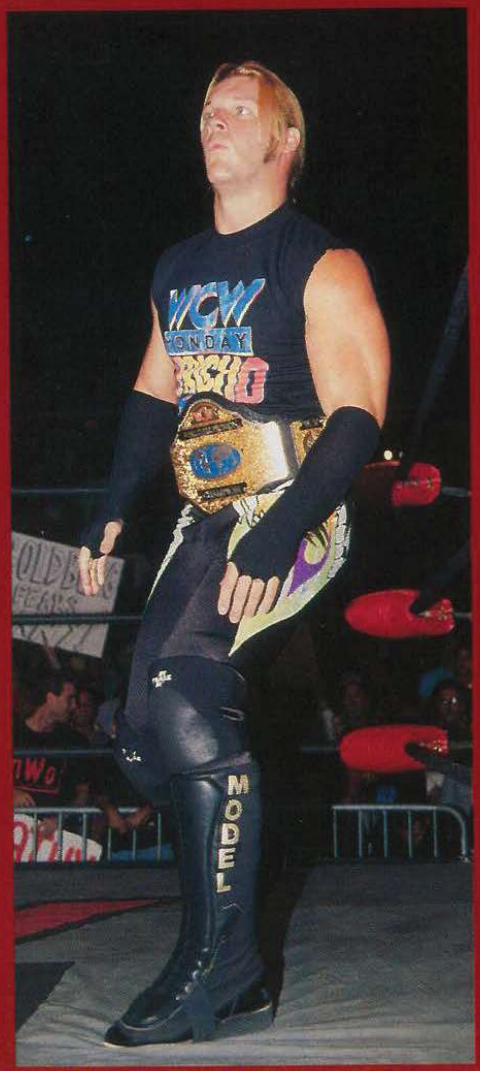
against Meng ... Kidman proved to be an excellent Cruiserweight Champion, defeating the weight-fudging Disco Inferno ... Jericho's fashion sense deserted him ... WCW MasterCards were some of the most popular ever issued ... Also hugely popular were the newest line of WCW videotapes — Superstar Series and Best of Series — marketed by Warner Home Video ... October 19th is declared Ric Flair Day by the Mayor of Minnesota ... Sting picked up the nWo limo with a forklift truck and turned it over on to it's roof. The rest of the Wolfpac proceeded to smash it to pieces using sledgehammers ... Kevin Nash and Goldberg made an appearance on *The Love Boat.*



horrible tactics in his victory over Sting at Halloween Havoc. He used an aluminum baseball bat to knock out the "Stinger" and score his most tainted victory yet in defense of his U.S. title ... The unstoppable Wrath scored his biggest win yet





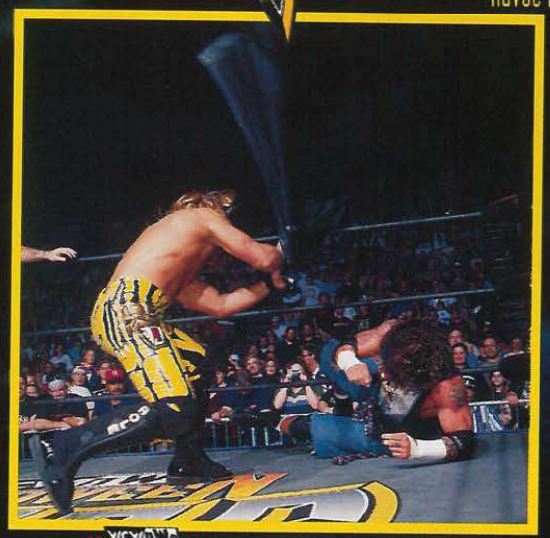


WCW/nWo Halloween Havoc

SNICKERS

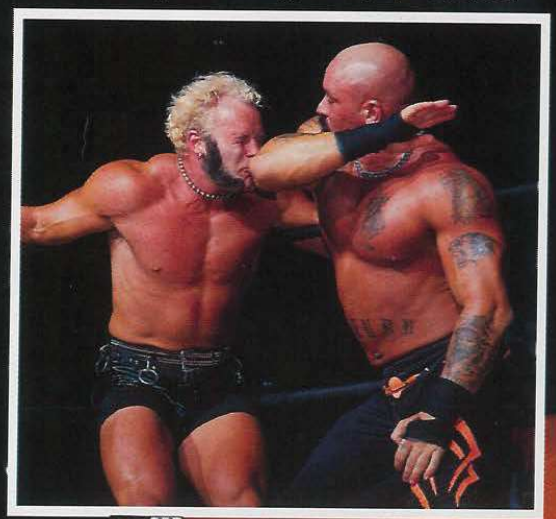
October 25, 1998 - Las Vegas, NV

This year's Havoc combined the stars of the future with the stars of today in a succession of "dream matches" every fan enjoyed to the fullest. The long-awaited Hall vs. Nash contest, The Steiner Brothers collision, and the Sharpshooter vs. the Scorpion Deathlock match kept the capacity crowd on their feet. Add to that the legendary Warrior vs. Hogan rematch and one of the most spectacular World Heavyweight title matches in WCW's storied history, and this year's Havoc was nothing short of spectacular.



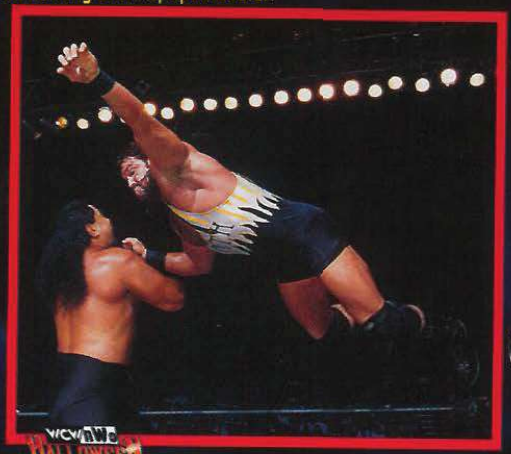
WORLD TV CHAMPIONSHIP
CHRIS JERICHO
beat
RAVEN

Raven claimed he didn't want to compete, but insults by Jericho forced his hand. He shouldn't have bothered as Jericho LionTamed his way to victory over the surly, whining superstar. (7:51)



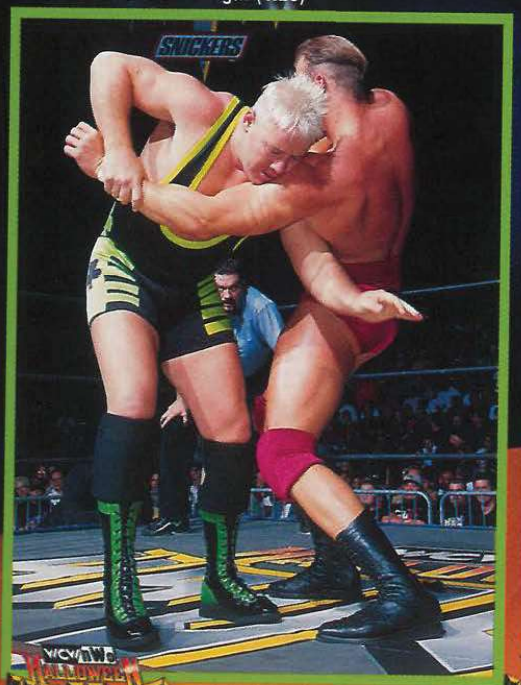
REVENGE MATCH
SATURN
beat
LODI

Mismatch of the year? Lodi might have been right when he held up a sign before the bout: "Lodi Hasn't Slept!" Saturn's Death Valley Driver never looked more powerful. (4:06)



WRATH
beat
MENG

The young superstar Wrath proved he was one of WCW's best big men with this huge victory over the torturer from Tonga! (4:23)

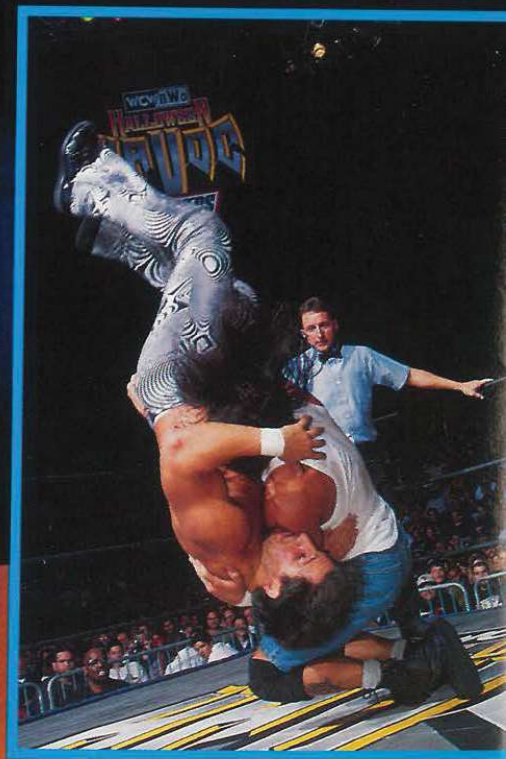


ALEX WRIGHT
beat
FIT FINLAY

Who is Europe's greatest wrestler? "Das Wunderkind" thinks he is, and this victory over Ireland's toughest brawler will go a long way toward cementing his claim. (5:09)

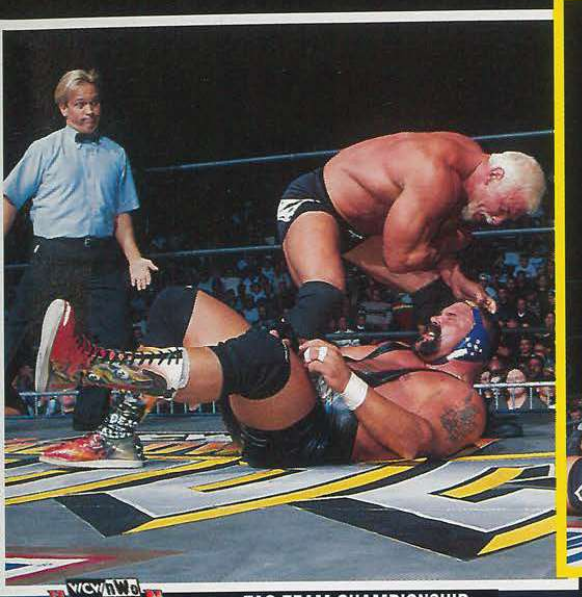
DISCO INFERNO
beat
JUVENTUD GUERRERA

For some reason, Disco lusted for a shot at the Cruiserweight title — which he earned with his victory over a game Juvi. (9:15)



CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP
KIDMAN
beat
DISCO INFERNO

Kidman, the Cruiserweight Champion, showed he might be great at any weight class with his victory over Disco, who might have been more than a couple of pounds over the weight limit. (10:49)



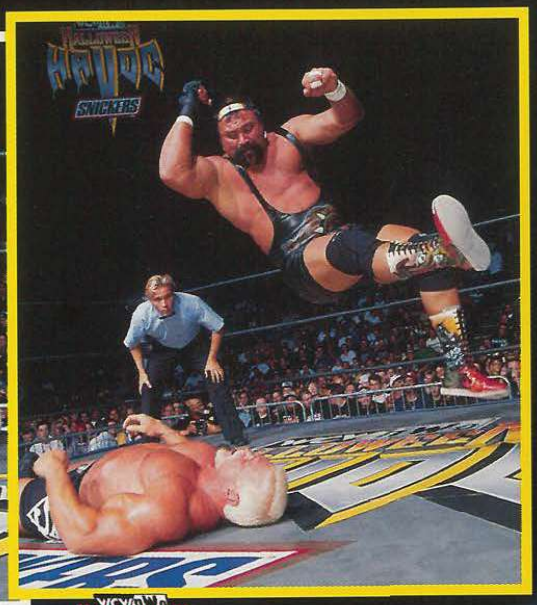
TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

RICK STEINER & BUFF BAGWELL

beat

SCOTT STEINER & GIANT

How could Rick win? A "reformed" Bagwell turned against him, and he was against two of the nWo's biggest and strongest. Guess what? Rick pinned Giant for the win and the World Tag Team title, earning him a bout against his brother ... finally! (8:21)

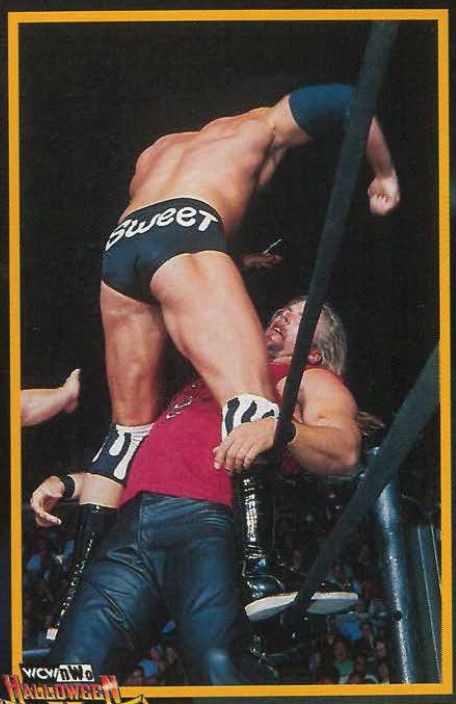


RICK STEINER

beat

SCOTT STEINER

Again, the cards were stacked against Rick. Buff ran into the ring, disguised as Bill Clinton, and attacked him. The ref was knocked out. And Big Poppa Pump was more vicious than ever. Guess what? Rick scored victory number two in the greatest night of his WCW career! (4:46)

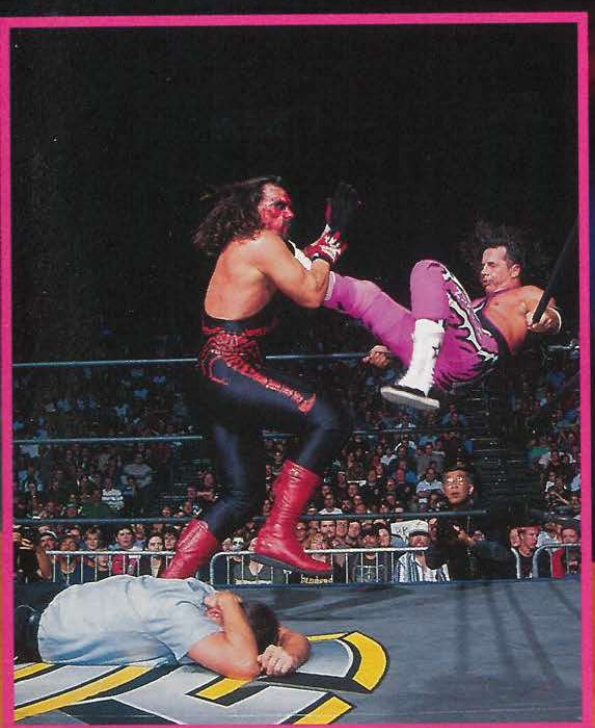


SCOTT HALL

beat

KEVIN NASH

Nash wanted to teach his former partner a lesson, and he did when he power bombed Hall not once but twice! However, instead of pinning Hall, he walked away from the ring. (14:19)



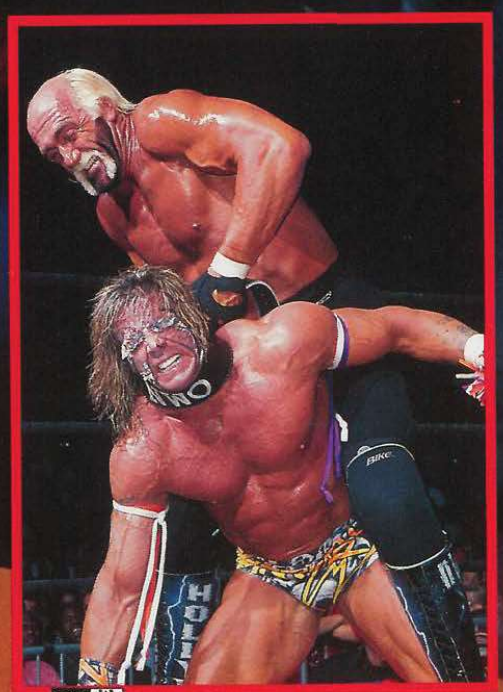
U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP

BRET "HITMAN" HART

beat

STING

This was the horrible bout where the "Hitman" used a bat to batter Sting unmercifully, causing the fan favorite to be carted from the ring on a stretcher. Hart proved he can be the lowest of the low in this harrowing bout. (15:05)

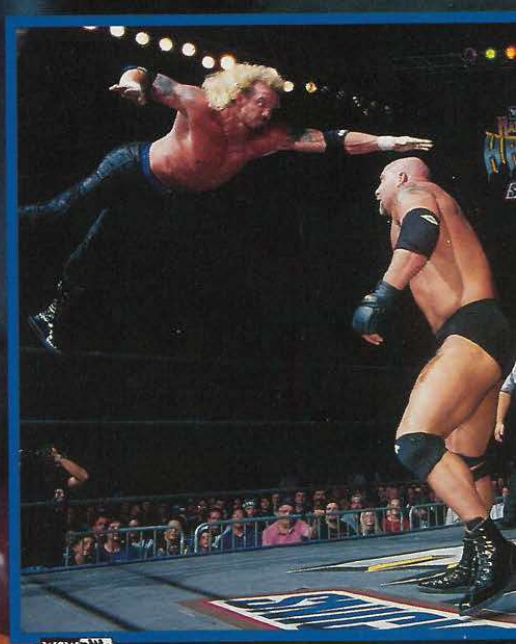


HOLLYWOOD HOGAN

beat

WARRIOR

More than eight years in the making, this brutal bout saw Hogan score yet another tainted win as Horace blasted Warrior with a chair, allowing Hulk to score the pin. After the bout, Horace and Hollywood attempted to set Warrior on fire, but were thwarted by WCW security. (14:20)



WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

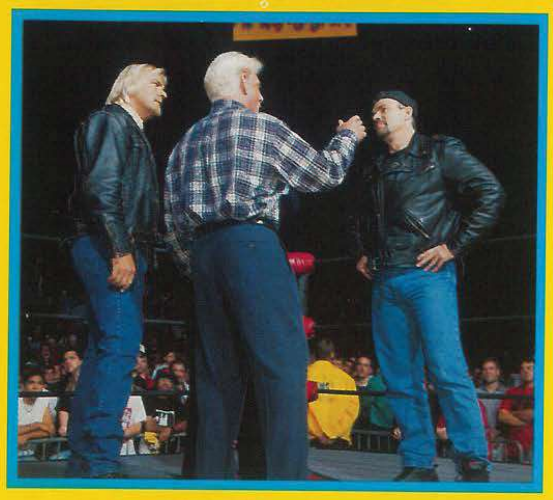
GOLDBERG

beat

DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(1998 Match of the Year Reader Award Winner)

What more could a wrestling purist hope for? Two of the greatest in the world battling for the World title! Goldberg kept his winning streak alive with a stirring pinfall; afterward, the two embraced in the ring in a show of true sportsmanship. (10:29)

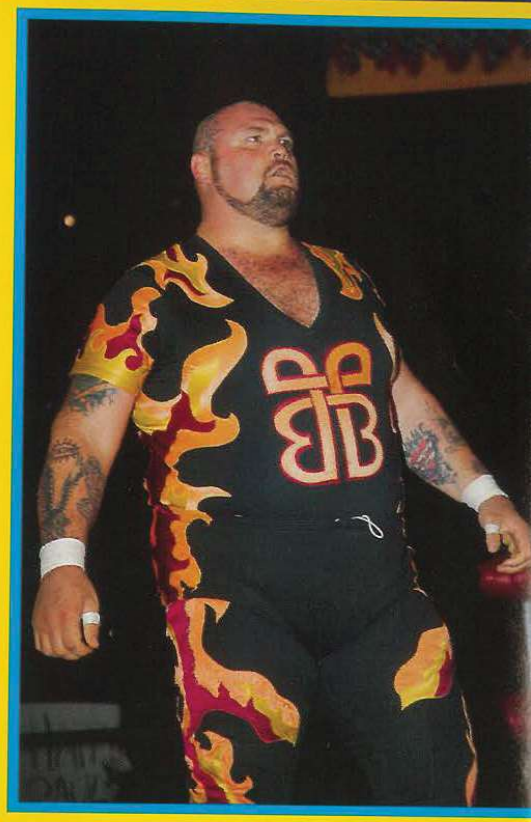


KIDMAN'S A MAN: He was once an enforcer for The Flock, but Billy Kidman is proving to be one of the finest WCW Cruiserweight champions ever. His performance against Juventud Guerrera, a sudden and unexpected addition to the nWo, was one of the finest matches in recent memory, and Kidman's Shooting Star Press is a nearly unbeatable finisher. Kidman has it all: speed, agility, surprising strength, and the fighting heart similar to the ones that beat in many heavyweights such as Sting and DDP. Even though Kidman lost the belt to Juvi during the month, there's little doubt that Kidman's star will continue to rise.

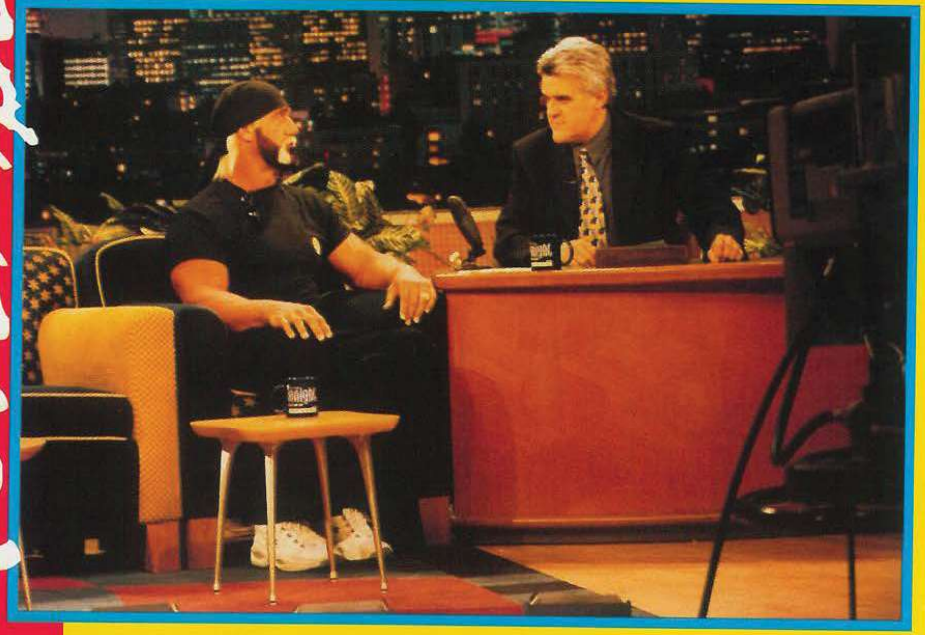
ONCE A HORSEMAN, ALWAYS A HORSEMAN?: Eric Bischoff, swerve king. He told millions of fans on Nitro that he wanted to end his feud with Ric Flair, and the "Nature Boy" sauntered out and brought a former Horseman and one of his closest friends, Barry Windham, to the ring for their face-to-face confrontation. Bischoff told Flair he didn't have the right to hire Windham. The exchange got heated, and Flair ended up attacking Bischoff until Windham turned on Flair! Members of the nWo prevented the other Horsemen from charging the ring, and Flair took a serious beating at the hands of his supposed close friend.

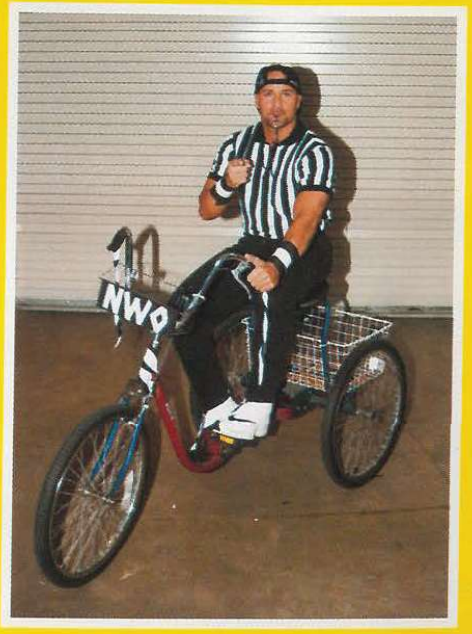
HOGAN FOR PRESIDENT: Hollywood Hogan made a stunning claim: He was retiring from the sport to make a run for President in the year 2000! Fans scoffed at Hogan's claim until he appeared on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and confirmed the proclamation. His disappearance from most WCW programs only added to the legitimacy of his intentions. In the interim, Hogan appointed Scott Steiner as the new head of the nWo Black & White.

BAM BAM ... WHO'S THERE?: Literally out of nowhere, one of the sport's biggest stars, Bam Bam Bigelow, started charging the ring during some of WCW's biggest events, and his target was clear. He lusted for a match against WCW World Champion Goldberg. He almost got just that, but the two behemoths were pulled apart on several occasions. Here was an unsigned competitor simply barreling into WCW, but who can stop a 390-pound "Beast from the East"? "I'm just taking what I want," Bigelow claimed. "If other wrestlers don't like it, they should do the same thing."



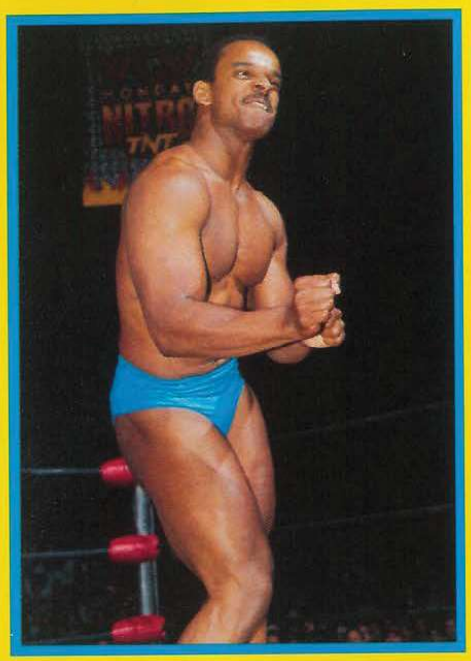
STEINER OUT OF HIS MIND: Something was seriously wrong with Scott Steiner, and even Buff Bagwell could no longer control Big Poppa Pump. He attacked referees left and right. He tore up the set. He throttled J.J. Dillon and several ringside crew members and officials. Referees simply refused to be the arbiters in Steiner's matches, which led to a new nWo development. Steiner and Bagwell started using their own referee, and there was no way that any WCW star could get a fair shot after that. Eventually, WCW referees cooled down and started working Scott's matches again, but it was hard not to agree with their logic. When Scott Steiner is on the mat, anyone can get seriously hurt!



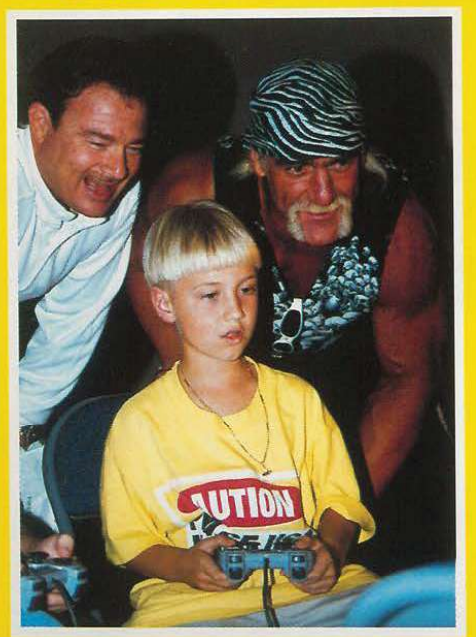


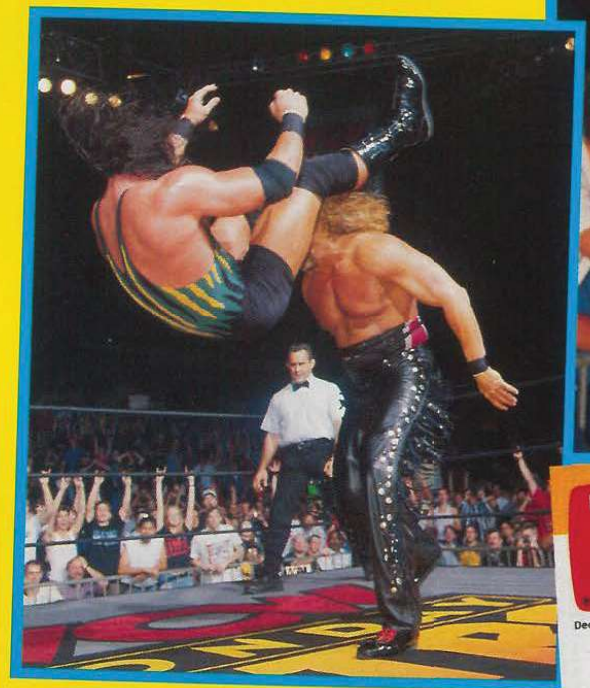
NOVEMBER REIGNS

"The Cat" hired Sonny Onoo as his permanent manager, and the duo shocked the world when they defeated Kaz Hayashi and Saturn at World War 3 ... Stevie Ray and Booker T argued often and loudly as Booker hadn't taken kindly to Stevie's sudden nWo loyalty — or to his constant use of his illegal slapjack ... DDP won the main event at WW3 against Hart, while Kevin Nash won a three-ring, 60-man battle royal to earn a shot at World Champion Goldberg at Starrcade ... Arrogance seemed to be paying off for several WCW stars. Norman Smiley, now suddenly ultra-confident and

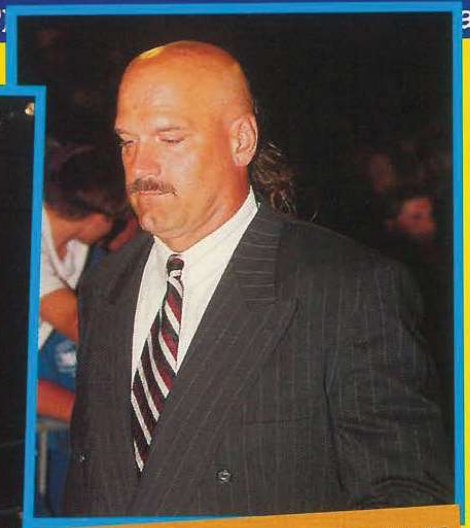


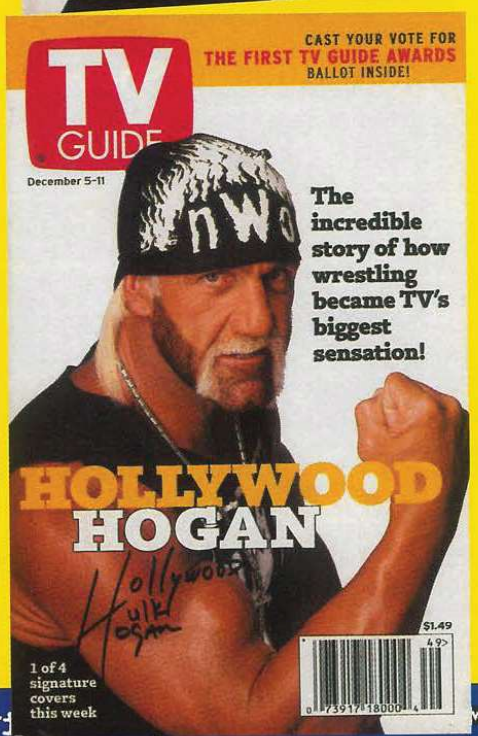
displaying his odd dance step, the "Big Wiggle," went on a tear, as did Wrath, who improved with every match. However, Nash handed Wrath his first defeat and sent out a warning to Goldberg ... WCW/nWo Magazine presented Mark Curtis with a special Referee of the Year award on November 29th. Mark — real name is Brian





Hildebrand — is embroiled in a battle against cancer ... On November 3rd, Jesse Ventura won the 1998 Minnesota gubernatorial election ... THQ, Inc released the computer game, *WCW Nitro* ... *TV Guide* ran four wrestling related collector covers on their November 30 issue. Goldberg and Hogan were two of the featured wrestlers, helping *TV Guide* to their second-highest ever sales. The highest selling issue was their tribute to Princess Diana ... Meng and Wrath filmed roles for upcoming episodes of *Mortal Kombat: Conquest*.

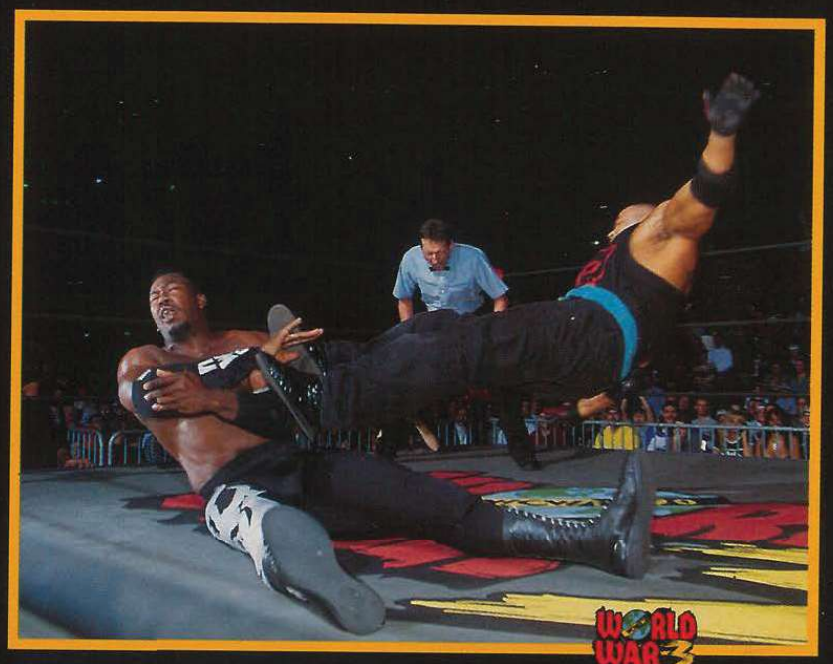




WORLD WAR 3

November 22nd, 1998
Auburn Hills, MI

Explosion after explosion! The fourth annual supercard featured stunning performances by Kidman, who regained his Cruiserweight Championship, and Diamond Dallas Page, who retained his U.S. title with a startling victory over the deranged Bret Hart. The World War 3 three-ring, 60-man battle royal may have been the finest moment of Kevin Nash's WCW career! His win earned the Wolfpac founder a shot at WCW World title-holder Goldberg at Starrcade '98, but little did anyone realize that the Champion himself would be forced to go into battle during World War 3!



WORLD WAR 3

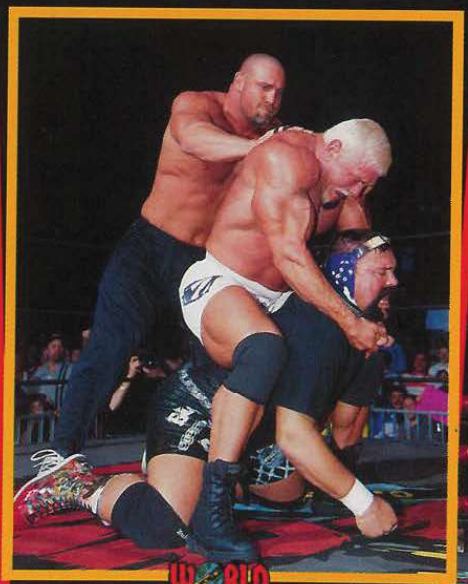
STEVIE RAY
beat
KONNAN

Stevie Ray took the advantage early on and Vincent interfered from the apron. Vincent went after K-Dogg with the slapjack but missed and hit his own Black & White comrade. Konnan went after Stevie Ray and could have taken the win, but he refused to stop the punishment he was dishing out, landed a punch to the referee, and was quickly DQ'd. (5:23)

WORLD WAR 3

WORLD TV CHAMPIONSHIP
CHRIS JERICHO
beat
BOBBY DUNCUM, Jr.

Duncum pulled out all the stops but was thwarted by Jericho's "bodyguard," Ralphus, who tripped the cowboy. Jericho took full advantage when he snatched the championship belt and smacked Duncum with it for the win to retain his TV Title. (13:22)



WORLD WAR 3

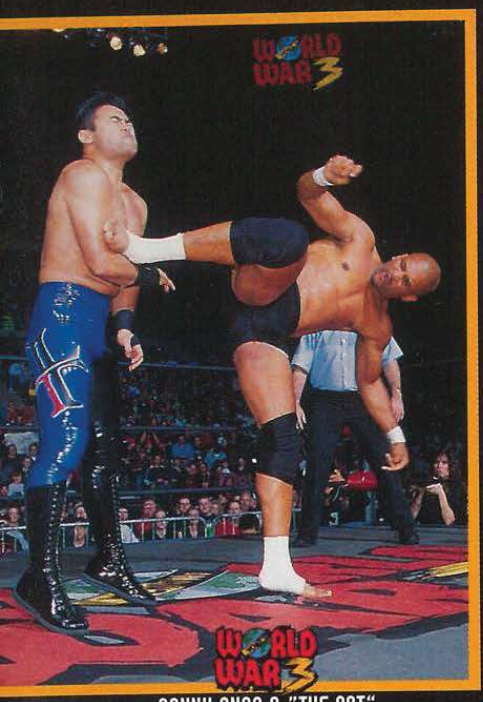
GRUDGE MATCH
SCOTT STEINER
no contest
RICK STEINER

Rick was attacked by the nWo before the match and as Scott Steiner, Buff Bagwell, and the "nWo referee," insulted Rick in the ring. The match was declared a No Contest after Giant dragged a beaten Rick Steiner to the ring where his brother attempted to finish him off. Goldberg ran in and saved Rick from this grisly fate .

WORLD WAR 3

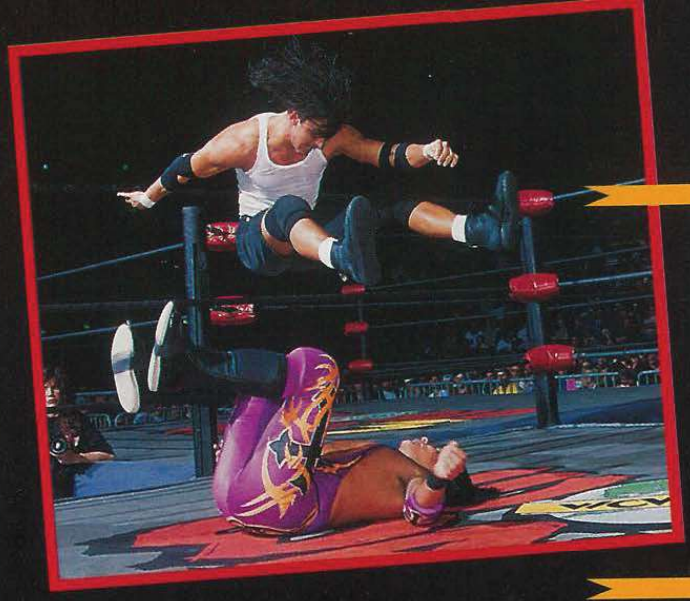
WRATH
beat
GLACIER

Wrath dominated the match and won with a pump handle and Meltdown to beat Glacier. (4:19)



SONNY ONOO & "THE CAT"
beat
KAZ HAYASHI & SATURN

Onoo tried to bribe Hayashi into not wrestling him, but to no avail. The fight was on and "The Cat" knocked out Saturn with a kick to the face and Onoo shrewdly dropped on top of Saturn for the pin.

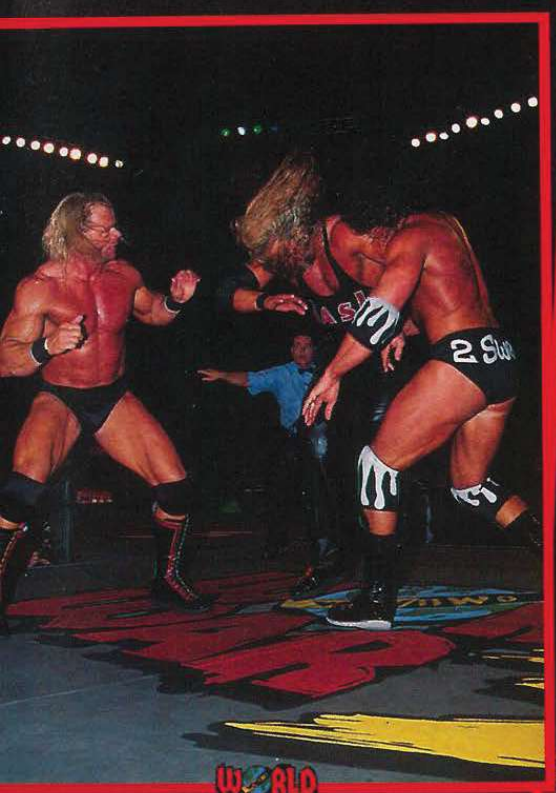


WORLD WAR 3
CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP
KIDMAN
beat
JUVENTUD GUERRERA

Juvi strutted to the ring in an LWO shirt and went after Kidman with a vengeance. Rey Mysterio, Jr. interfered on behalf of Kidman, allowing the him to execute his Shooting Star Press and regain the Cruiserweight title. (15:29)

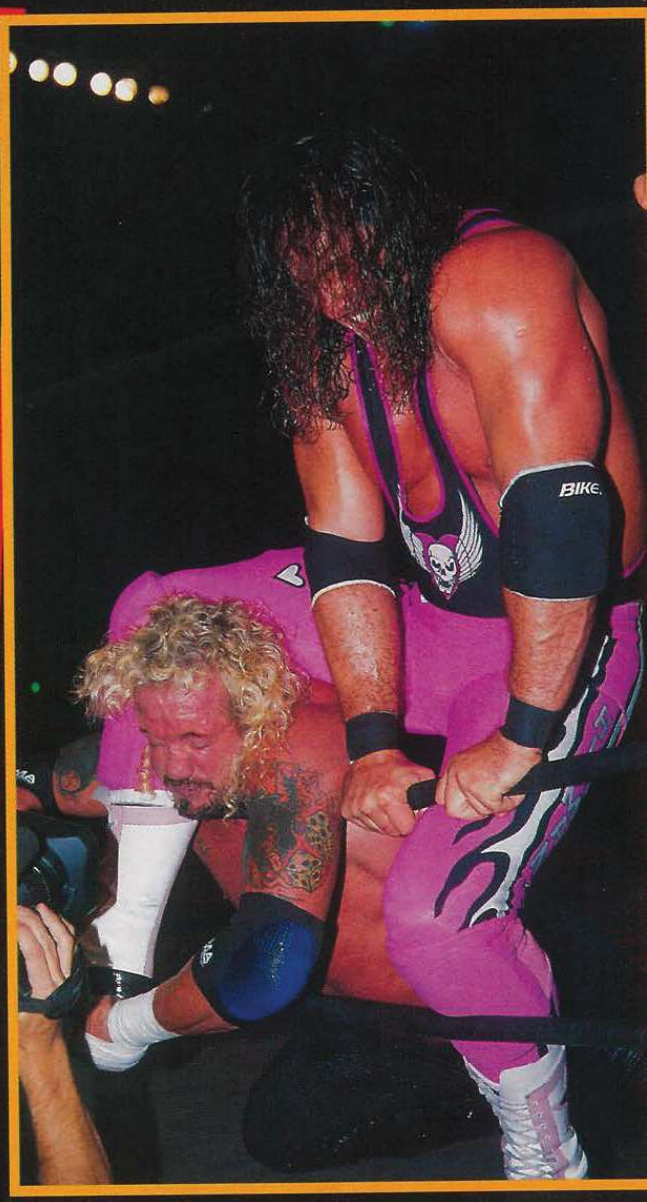
WORLD WAR 3
U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP
DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE
beat
BRET "HITMAN" HART

In a brutal bout, Hart used brass knuckles to down DDP and slap on the Sharpshooter but the referee was unable to make the count due to an earlier altercation with Hart. At last, the nWo "referee" ran in and indicated that the bout was won by Hart. DDP came to and executed a vicious Diamond Cutter on Hart for the win to retain the U.S. title. (19:01)

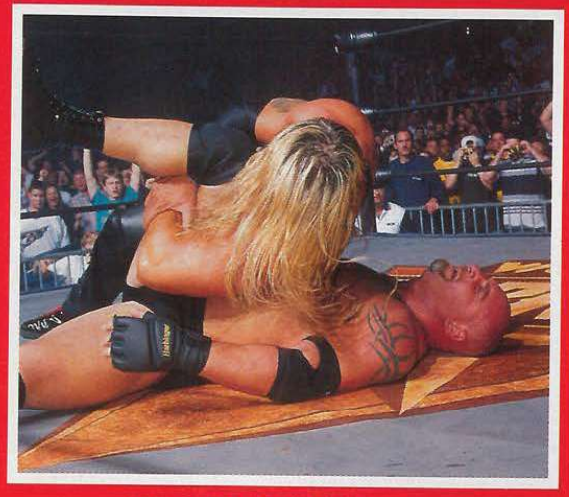


WORLD WAR 3
KEVIN NASH
WON 60-MAN THREE RING BATTLE ROYAL
WINNER GETS WORLD TITLE MATCH AGAINST GOLDBERG AT STARRCADE

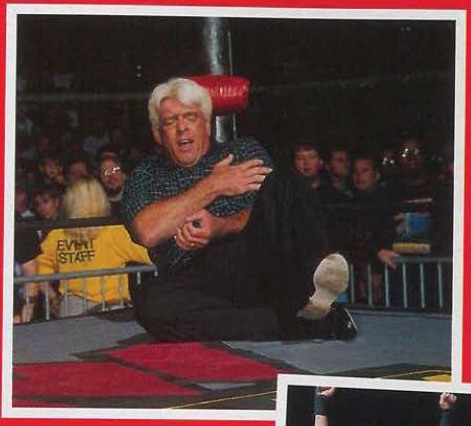
Mayhem ensued as three rings were filled to capacity with rabid wrestlers vying for a shot at the World Heavyweight title, and it's owner, Goldberg. Kevin Nash was on a streak no one could stop, as he won the battle to wrestle the then-undefeated Heavyweight Champ. (23:33)



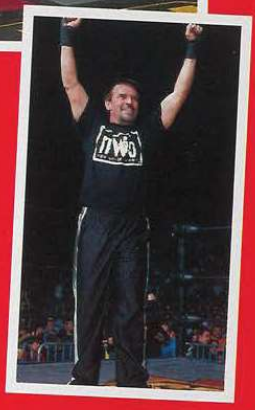
December



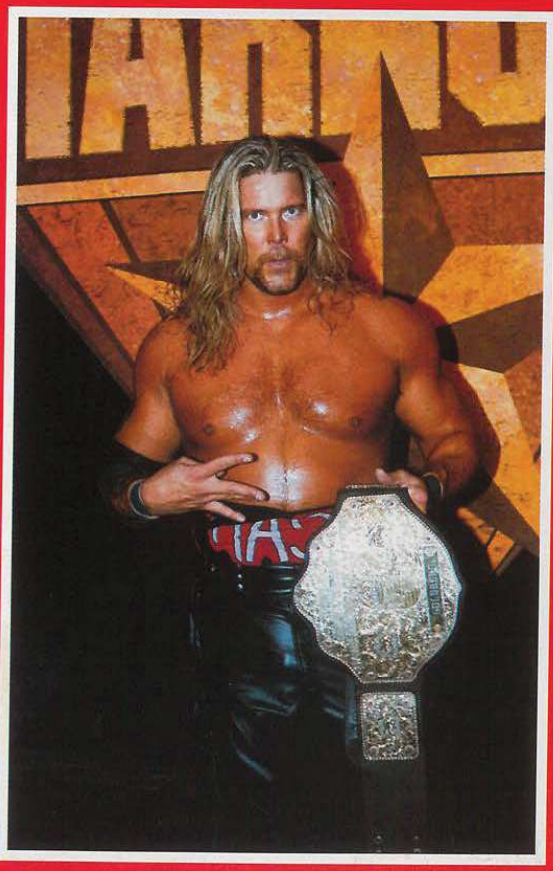
THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENS: Starrcade '98 will forever be remembered as the night the unthinkable occurred. Goldberg, previously undefeated, was not only beaten, but lost the WCW World title to Kevin Nash! The plot would thicken in early 1999, but in short, it was the outside interference of Scott Hall that led to this shocking upset. Goldberg was inspired, he even thwarted attempts at outside interference by Disco Inferno and Bam Bam Bigelow, sending them out of the ring. However, Hall, dressed as a yellow-shirted security official, ran to the ring apron and zapped Goldberg twice in the chest with a cattle prod taser, sending the 291-pound champion collapsing to the canvas. One power bomb later, and Kevin Nash had scored the biggest win of his WCW career. Did he know about Hall's interference? The weeks that followed provided the answer to that question.

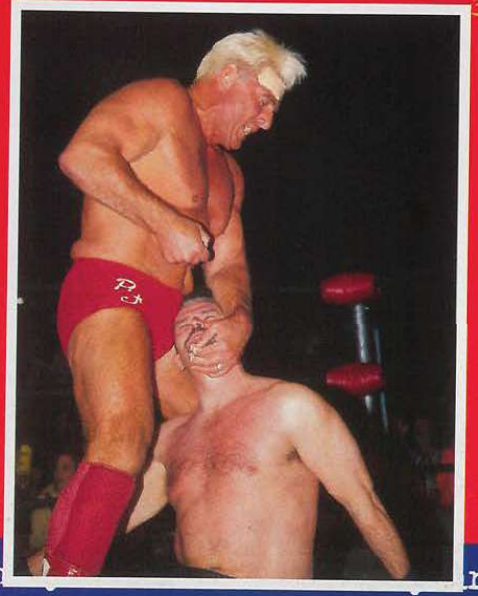


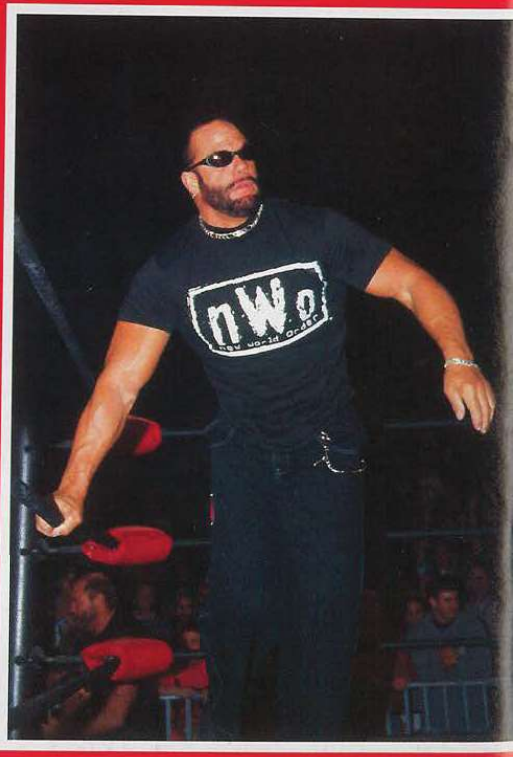
FLAIR VS. BISCHOFF EXPLODES: With each passing week, the hatred between the 13-time former World Champion and the WCW President grew more intense and dangerous. Flair, livid during one interview with Gene Okerlund, collapsed at the side of the ring, clutching his chest. Arn Anderson and several WCW officials ran to ringside, and Flair was carted off to the hospital. Had Flair suffered a heart attack? According to Flair's physician, he had unwittingly ingested the drug known as Digitoxin. So had Flair been poisoned? No one has ever owned up to it, but while Flair was away, Bischoff started to play. In one repulsive moment, Bischoff brought David and Reid Flair, Ric's sons, to the ring, supposedly to apologize for "all the grief I have caused your family," but instead, Bischoff and Barry Windham attacked David, administering a brutal beating. Bischoff even kissed Flair's wife, Beth, which raised the stakes even higher. On a subsequent Nitro, Windham was wrestling Van Hammer when he was attacked by Flair, who administered a brutal revenge beating. At Starrcade, however, it was interference by a returning Curt Hennig that cost Flair his bout against Bischoff when the cunning nWo leader blasted Flair in the face with illegal knucks. The next evening, Flair demanded another match, promising to give Bischoff what he wanted: Flair's retirement, plus his house and cash. But if Flair won, he got Bischoff's job for 90 days! The nWo tried to interfere, but were held at bay by the Horsemen and a host of WCW's superstars as Flair exacted his revenge and became the leader of the greatest wrestling organization in the world!

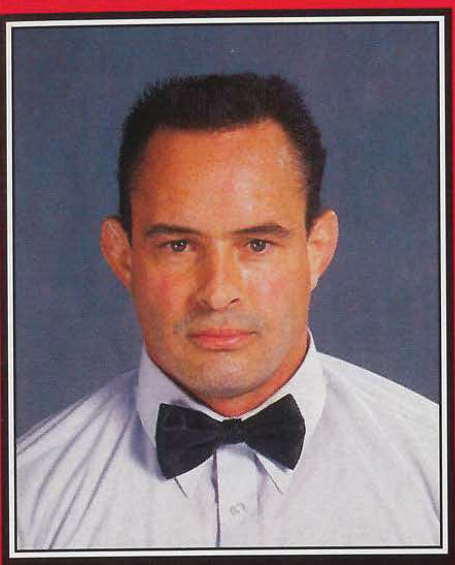


SATURN, THE SUPERSTAR: At first, Perry Saturn was looked upon only as an enforcer for Raven's Flock, but in the latter half of 1998, Saturn became a superstar in WCW. His victories over Raven, Norman Smiley, Chris Jericho, and other top stars were the talk of the second half of the year. At Starrcade, Saturn took on "The Cat," who had aided his manager, Sonny Onoo, in scoring a tainted pinfall victory at WW3. Saturn was seething, and as hot as "The Cat" was, it was certainly Saturn's night at Starrcade, as he scored the most satisfying victory of his WCW career.





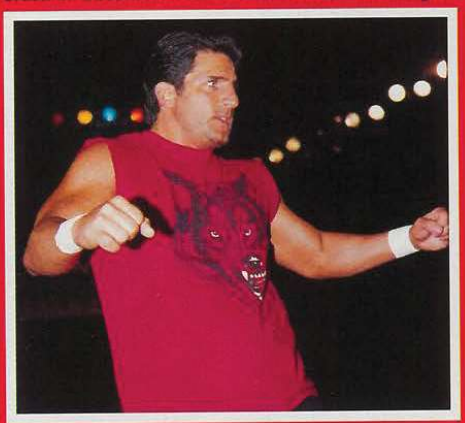




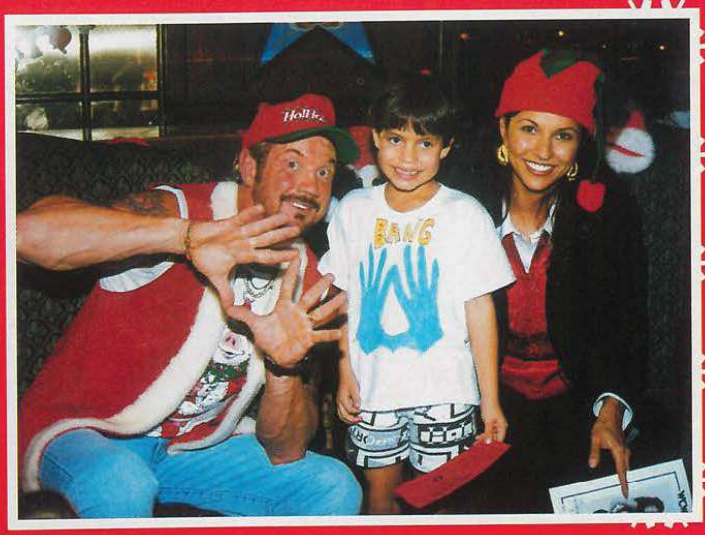
Brady Boone: 1960 - 1998 R.I.P

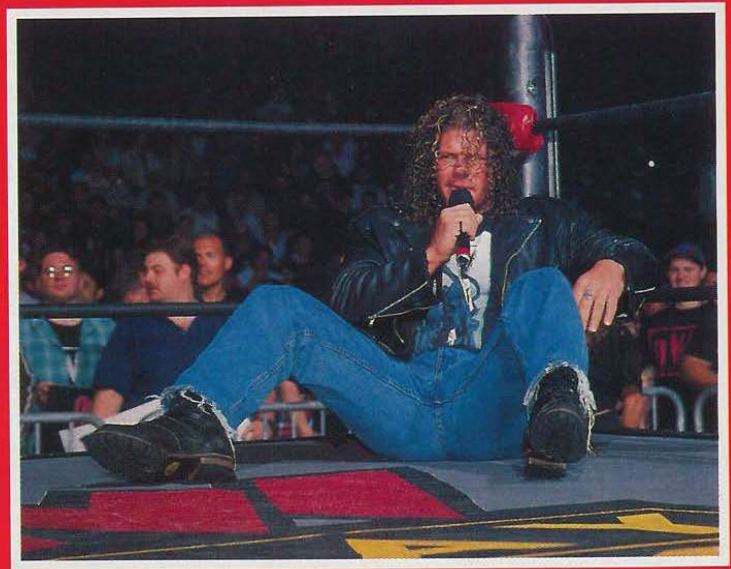
DECEMBER DOINGS

"Macho Man" Randy Savage, accompanied by a gorgeous blonde, re-appeared during Nitro on December 29th, to help his old rival Ric Flair defeat Eric Bischoff. No doubt as a slap in the face to his nemesis, Hollywood Hogan ... WCW's newest referee, Brady Boone was tragically killed in a car crash on December 15th ... Storm became the eighth



Nitro Girl, who have easily superseded the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders to become America's favorite sports dancers ... nWo Hollywood began attempting to recruit Lex Luger ... Disco Inferno started wearing Wolfpac T-shirts to the ring, although no one in the 'Pac would even consider making the dancing fool a member (that would change in early 1999, however) ... During a Nitro in St. Louis, Buff Bagwell masqueraded as Mark McGwire, and later he and Scott Steiner burned a Cardinals hat on their way to becoming the two most hated men in wrestling ... Giant attacked DDP and chokeslammed him through the Nitro set ... Raven totally lost it, refusing to compete in matches and was finally dragged back to his lavish home in Florida by his mother ... Referee Scott Dickenson started to call matches involving Saturn unfairly, as the arbiter felt he was being manhandled by Perry too often ... DDP scored one of his biggest victories ever with a clean pinfall win over Giant at Starrcade ... DDP and Kimberly held their annual Xmas party to benefit DDP's charity, "Banging it out for books" ... Kidman won an incredible triangle match over Rey Mysterio, Jr. and Juventud Guerrera in defense of his Cruiserweight title, and then immediately accepted a challenge by Eddy Guerrero for a match from which he also emerged victorious ... *People* ran an article about Bill Goldberg, who was also voted as one of the sexiest bald men of 1998 ... Kevin Nash, Goldberg, The Nitro Girls, and the Horsemen all appeared on QVC to sell WCW/nWo merchandise.

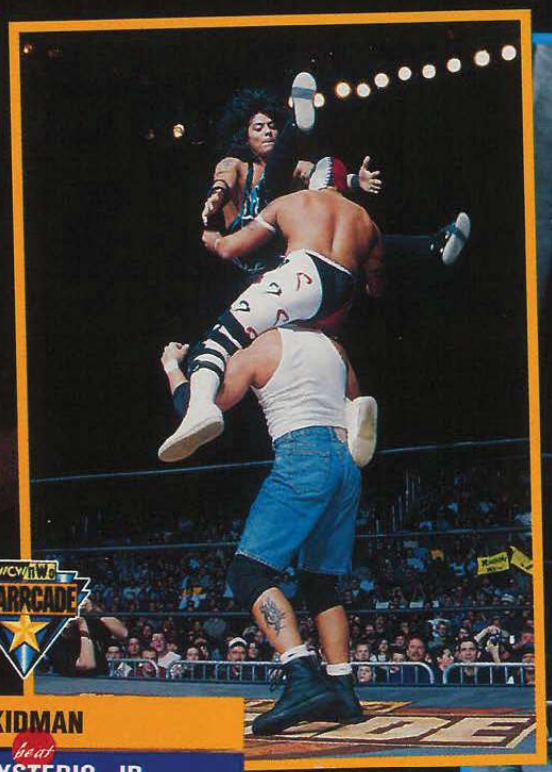




WCW/nWo STARRCADE

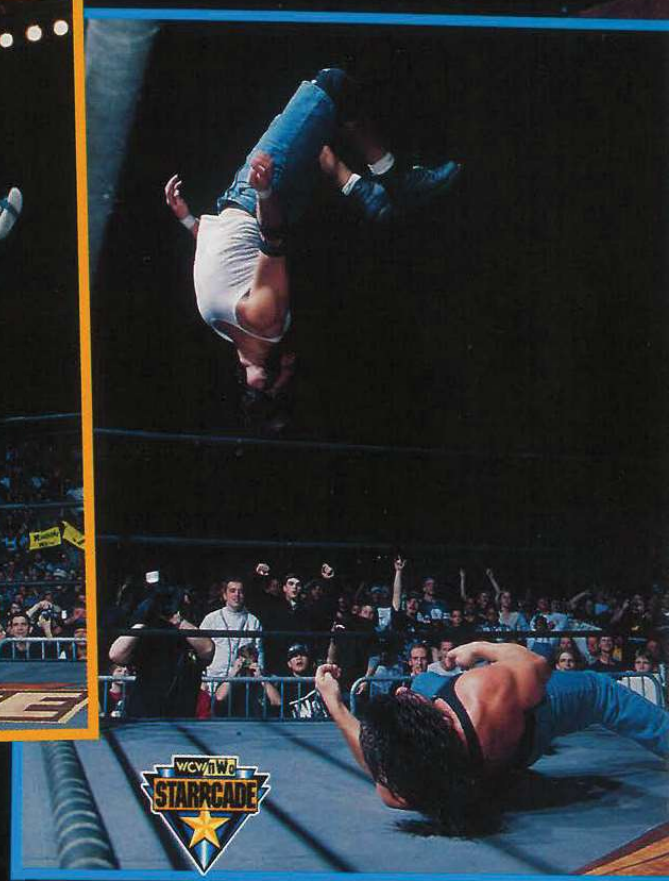
December 27, 1998
Washington, D.C.

Do you like upsets? Earth-shattering, groundbreaking, world turning shockers? The 1998 edition of Starrcade, the granddaddy of all supercards, had fans at the MCI Center gasping, and millions of stunned Pay-Per-View fans on the edge of their seats. The biggest story, of course, was the Goldberg vs. Kevin Nash controversy, sure to be a hot topic for years to come!



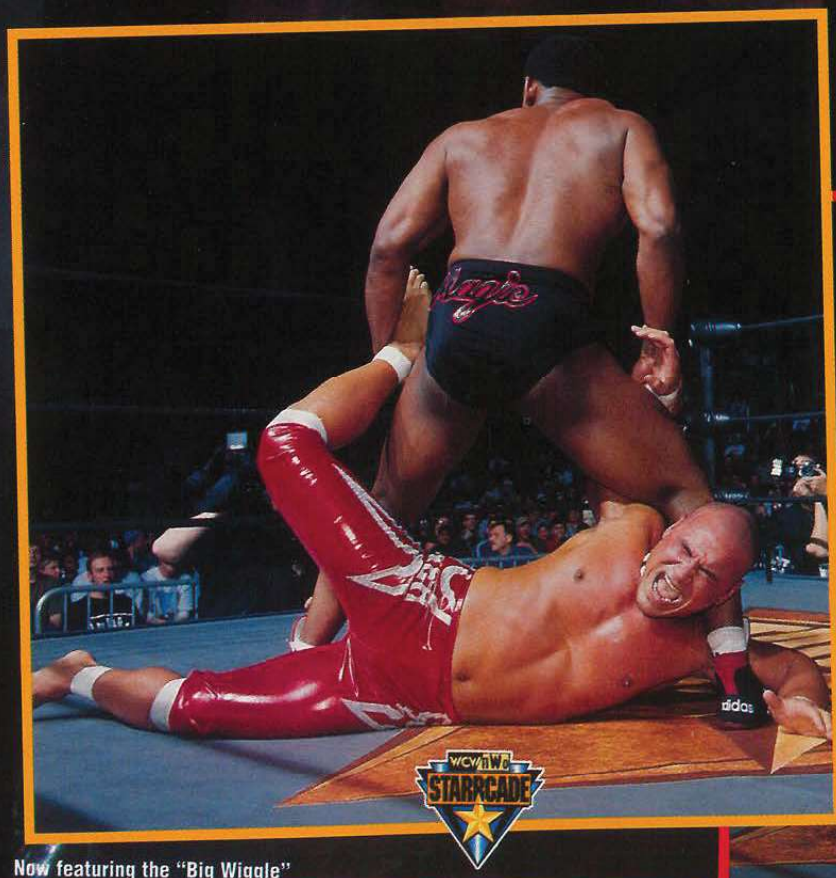
KIDMAN
beat
REY MYSTERIO, JR.
&
JUVENTUD GUERRERA

This triple-threat bout for the Cruiserweight title showed that Kidman may be the best such titlist ever, defeating both men for the biggest victory of his still-young career. (15:21)



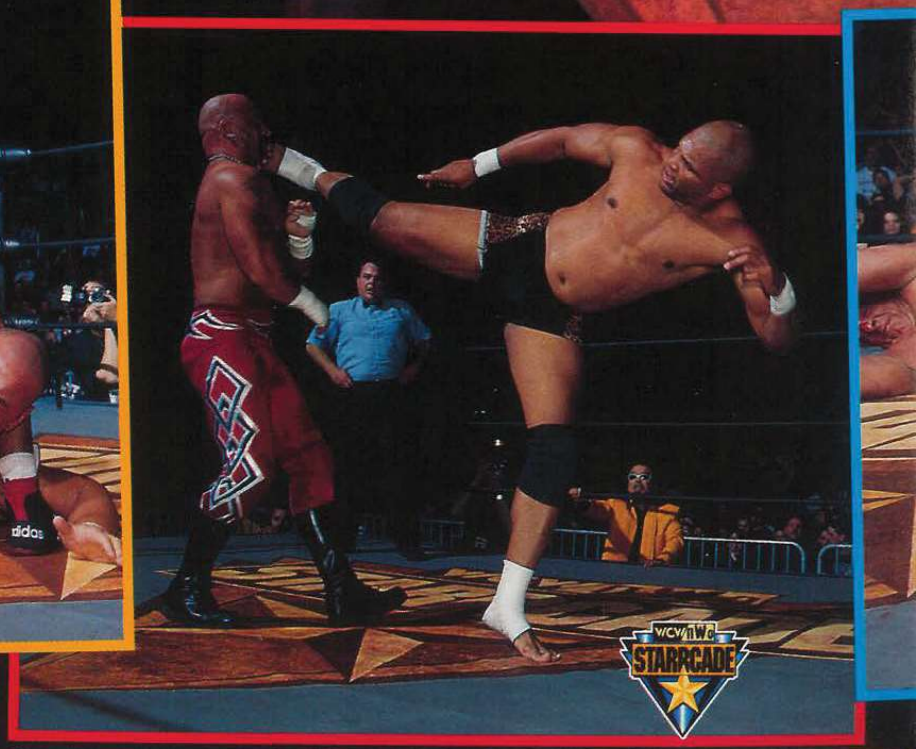
KIDMAN
beat
EDDY GUERRERO

Amazingly, Guerrero stormed the ring and challenged the weary Kidman, who accepted! Just over 10 minutes and one Shooting Star Press later, could anyone dispute this was the most wondrous night of any Cruiserweight Champion? (10:51)



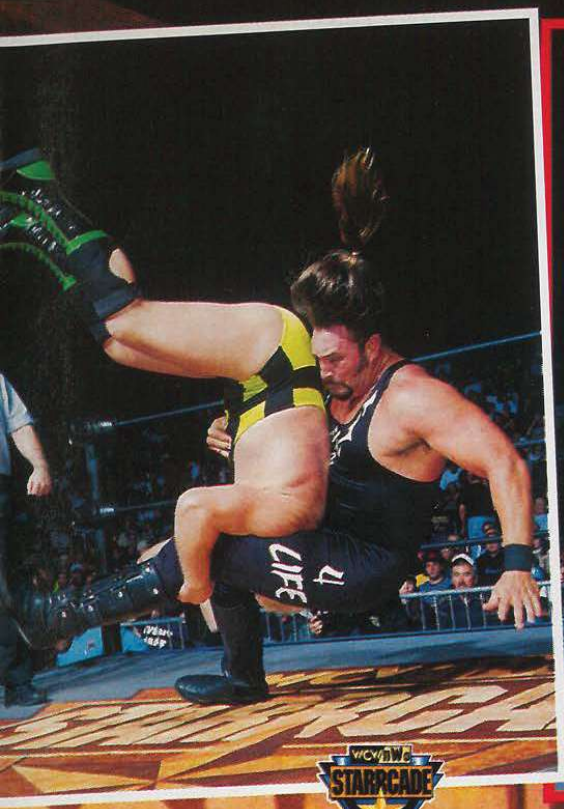
Now featuring the "Big Wiggle" and an arrogant attitude, the British star beat the former TV Champion with new found confidence. (11:34)

NORMAN SMILEY
beat
PRINCE IAUKEA



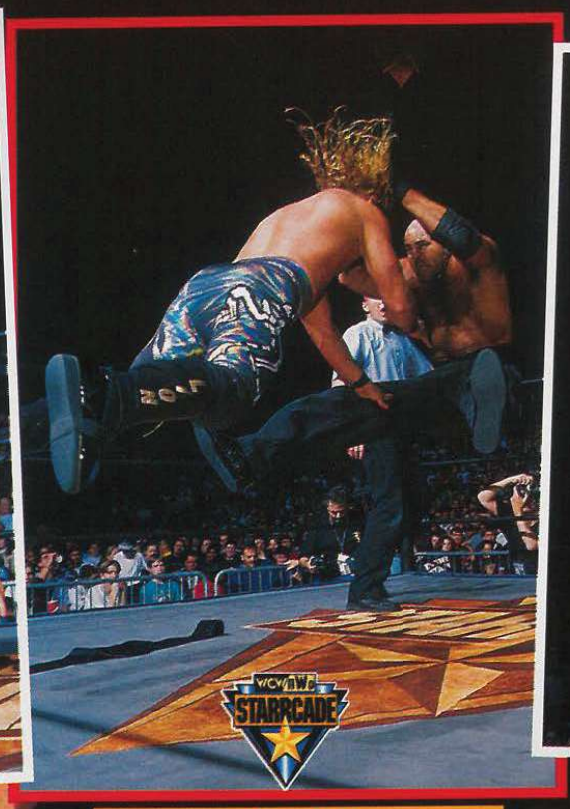
Remember how Sonny Onoo pinned Saturn at World War 3? Terrible move! Saturn got his revenge with a stunning and powerful display of force against the "The Cat." (7:08)

SATURN
beat
"THE CAT"



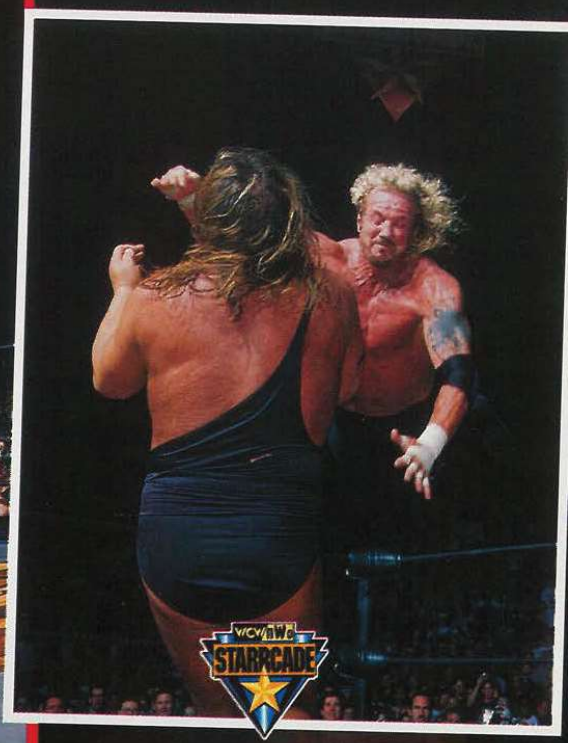
SCOTT NORTON & BRIAN ADAMS
beat
FIT FINLAY & JERRY FLYNN

The nWo's biggest and most powerful thugs had a field day in this one, displaying their incredible power and strength in this all-action thriller. (9:01)



KONNAN
beat
CHRIS JERICHO

Jericho threw everything at the Mexican superstar, but even Ralphus was shocked when K-Dogg locked Chris in the Tequila Sunrise for the submission victory. (7:30)

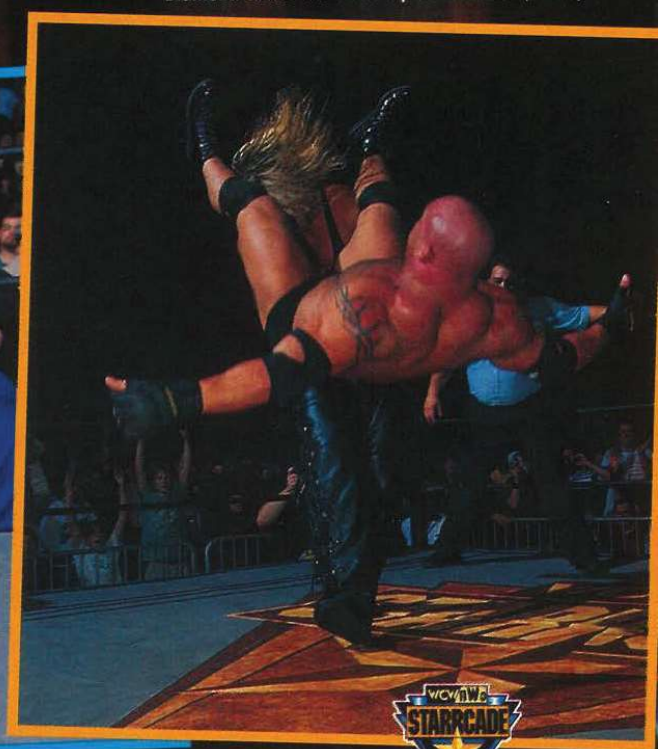


DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE
beat
GIANT

DDP avenged several brutal attacks by Giant with this stunning victory, bolstered by an incredible Diamond Cutter from the top turnbuckle. (12:47)

ERIC BISCHOFF
beat
RIC FLAIR

The hatred spilled over as months of attacks and taunts by "Easy-E" turned Flair into a raging madman. However, it was a pair of knucks handed to Bischoff by the returning Curt Hennig that scored the pinfall victory over Flair! (7:10)

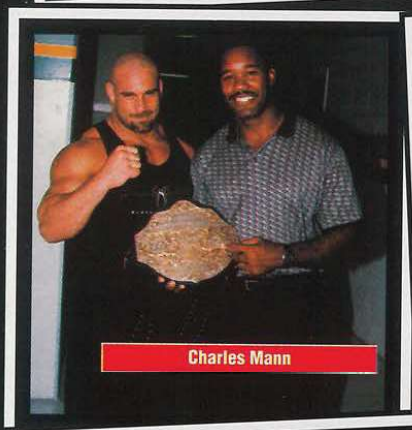


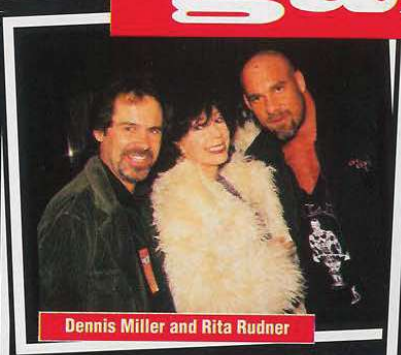
KEVIN NASH
beat
GOLDBERG

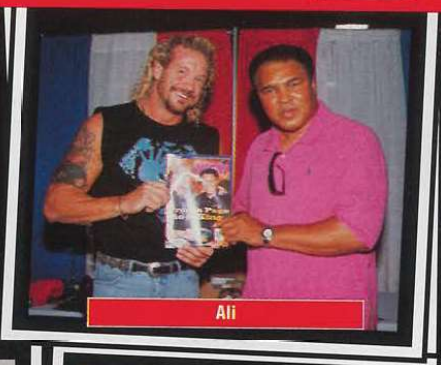
Clearly the biggest event of the year was the final one for 1998: Nash defeated Goldberg for the World title and ended his undefeated streak ... but it was outside interference by Scott Hall and his stun gun, followed by a power bomb, that spelled the difference! A week later, Nash would show the world how much the World title meant to him, but for now, this was the biggest victory of his career. (11:21)

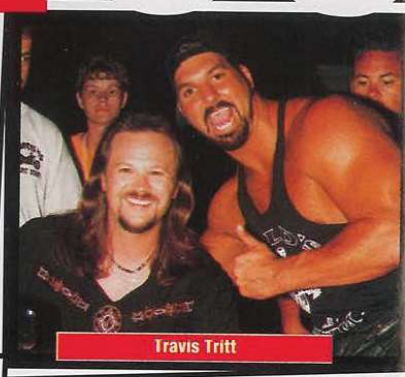
Star gazing IN '98

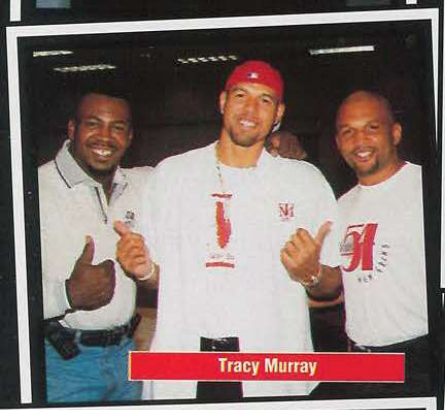
Muhammad Ali

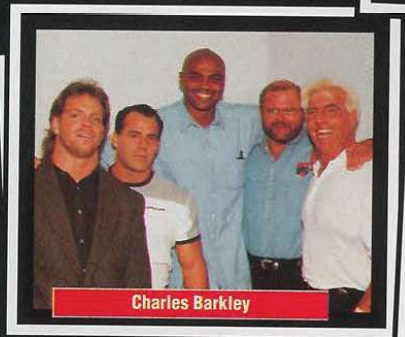

Charles Mann

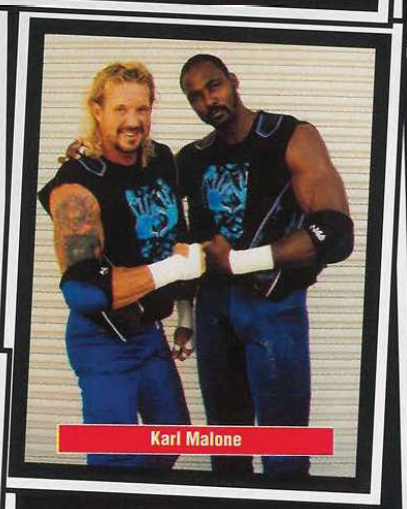

Dennis Miller and Rita Rudner

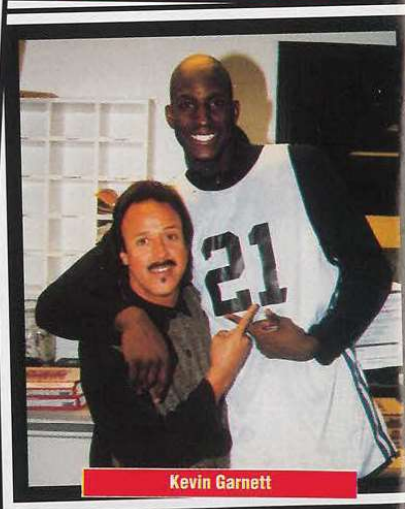

Ali

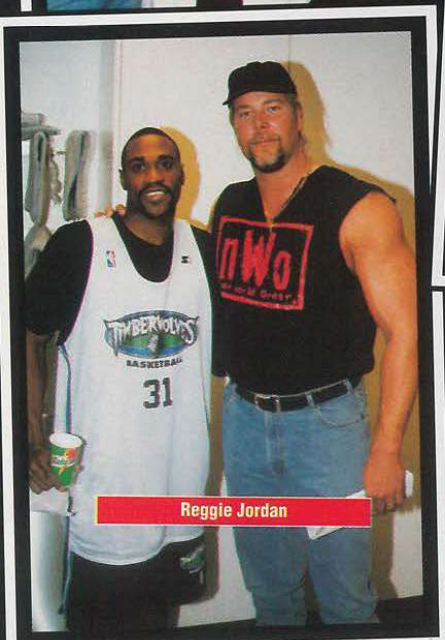

Travis Tritt


Tracy Murray

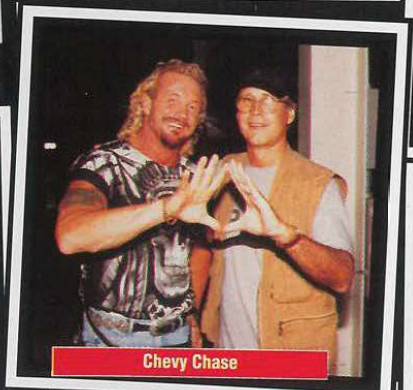

Charles Barkley


Karl Malone

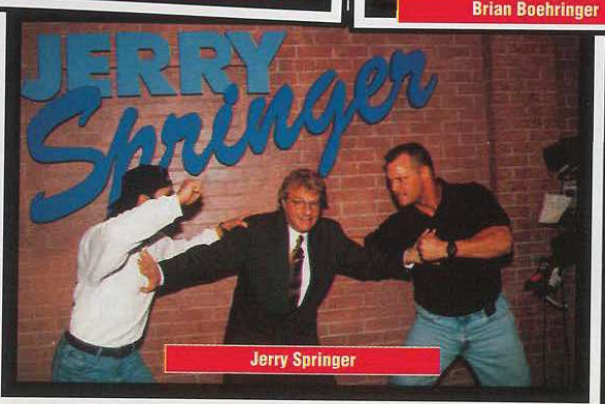

Kevin Garnett



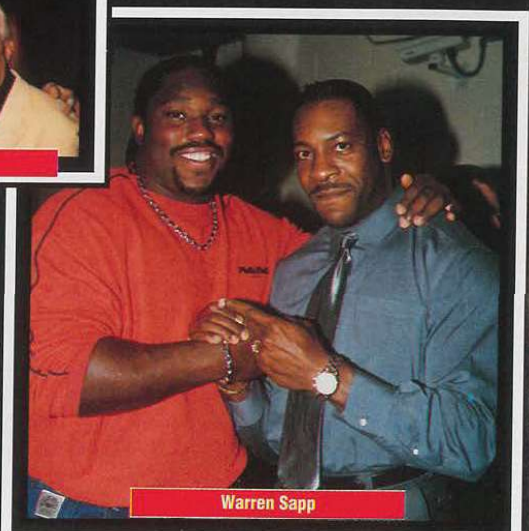
Reggie Jordan


Chevy Chase

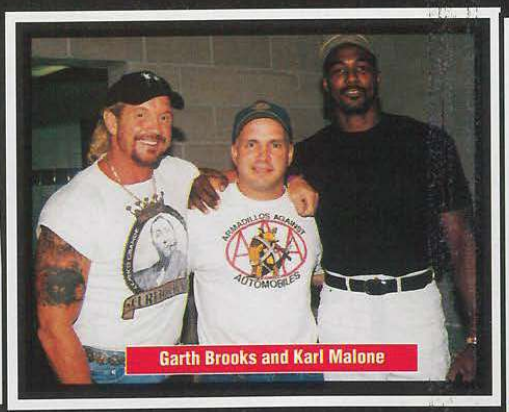
Brian Boehringer



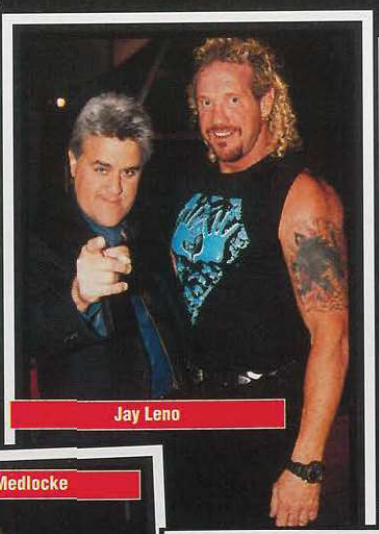
Jerry Springer


Warren Sapp

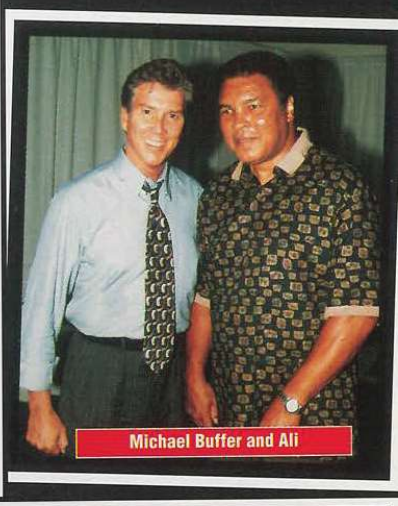
Joe Frazier



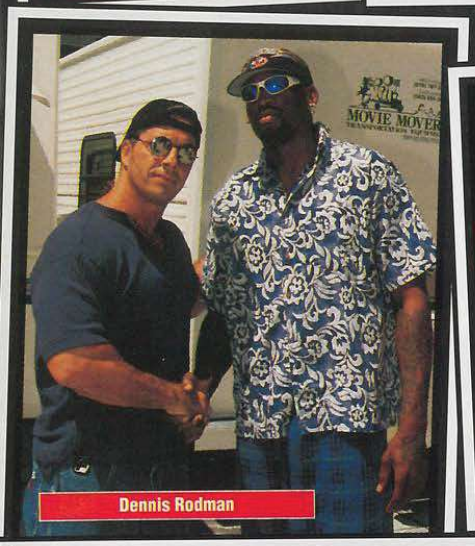
Garth Brooks and Karl Malone



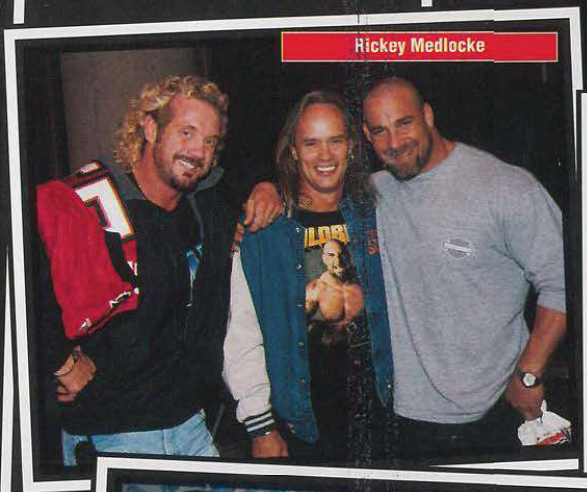
Jay Leno



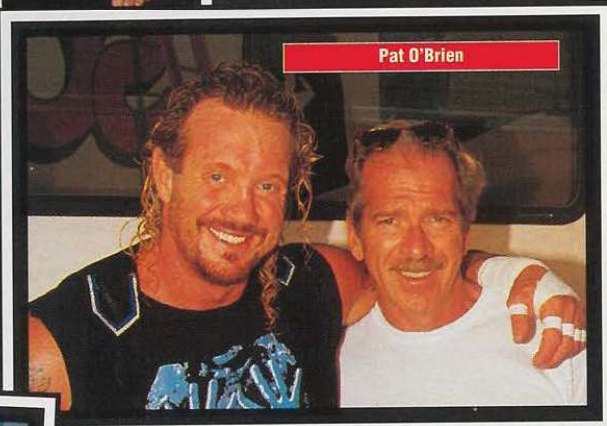
Michael Buffer and Ali



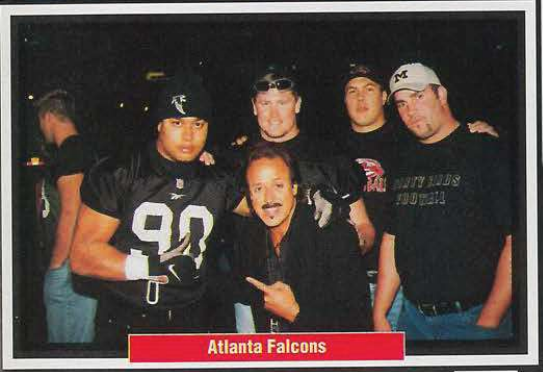
Dennis Rodman



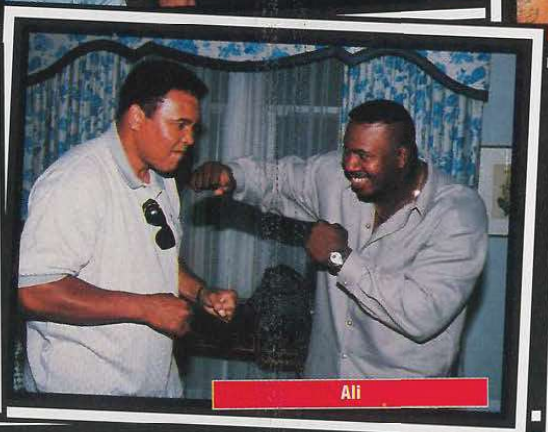
Rickey Medlocke



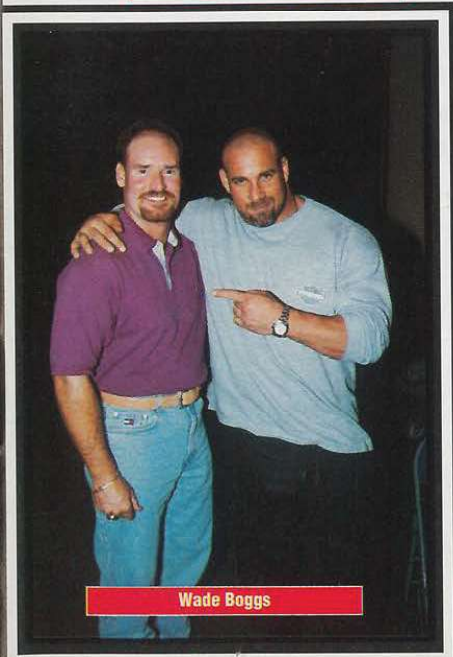
Pat O'Brien



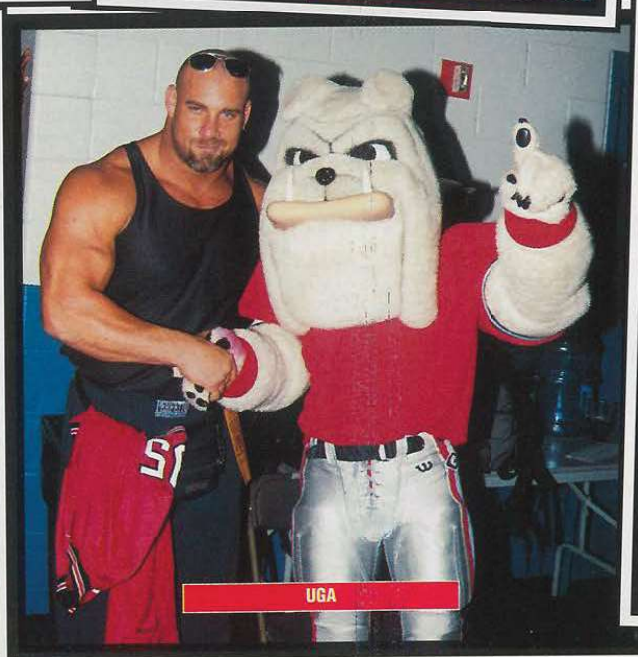
Atlanta Falcons



Ali



Wade Boggs



UGA

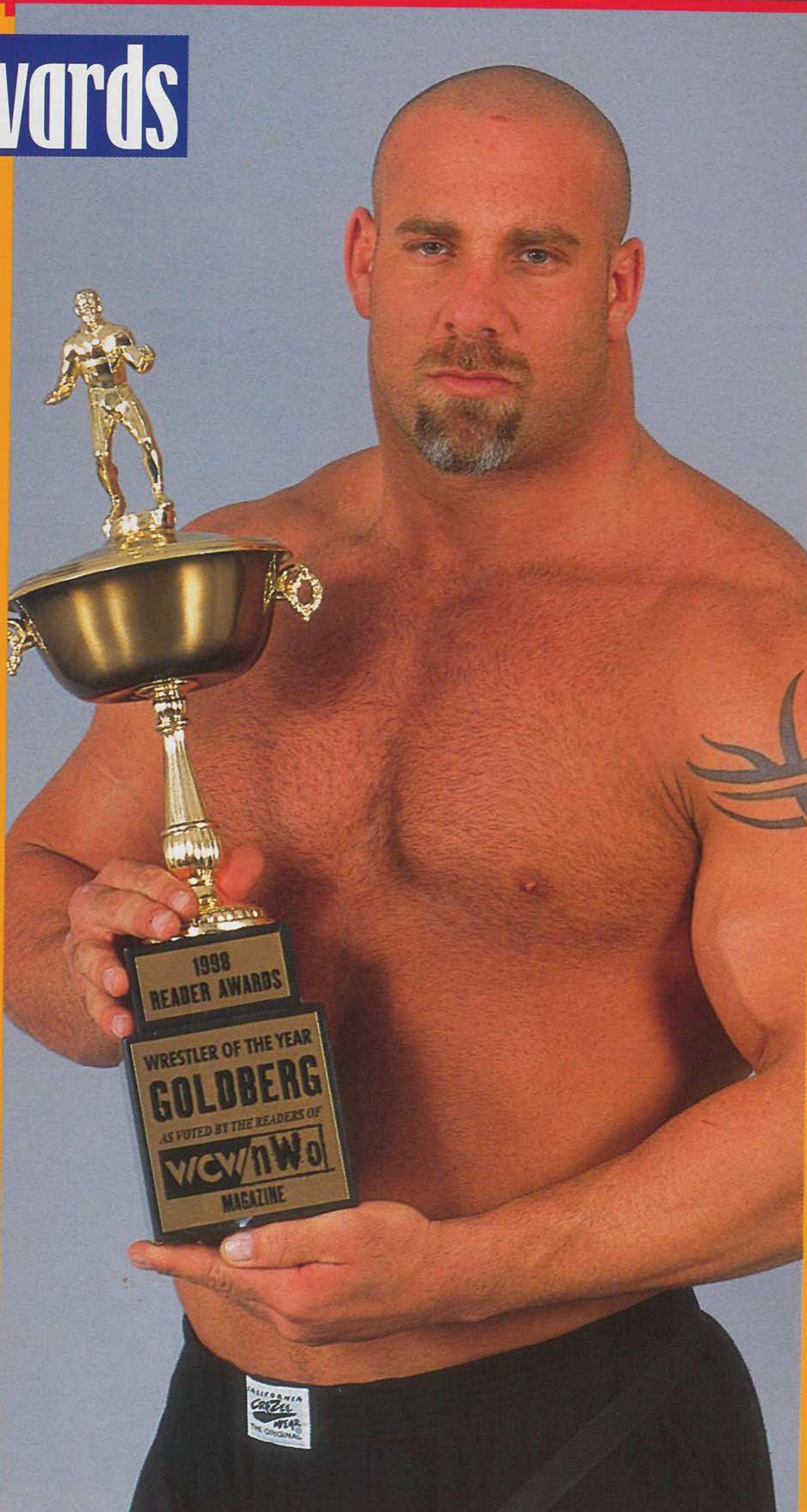
Jason Hervey

1998 Reader Awards

by Patty Therre

1998 was certainly a memorable year and the readers of WCW/nWo Magazine spoke volumes about who they felt were at the top and why. This year saw the winner of Wrestler of the Year also take the Match of the Year, a first in the history of the Reader Awards. Another shocking first: A double award-winner for two completely different categories!

Votes poured in from readers all over the country and, indeed, the world! The result was a few landslide victories and a few oh-so-close wins. Due to special circumstances, another award was also given out; that of Runner-up of the Year. Here are YOUR 1998 winners, and the runners-up.



WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

Talk about a landslide! Goldberg handily won this category, proving that the readers have followed his meteoric rise and have appreciated the amazing natural talent that Goldberg possesses.

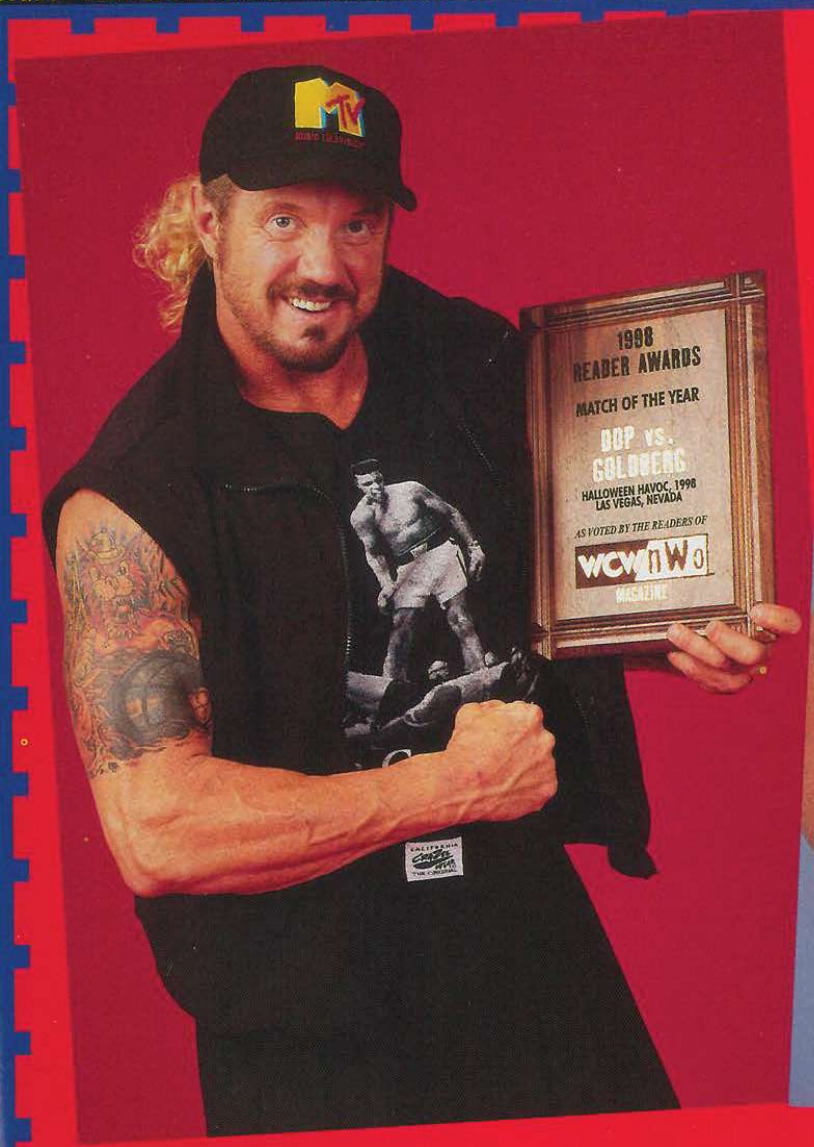
"Bill Goldberg is the classic hero," said Manny Dillis of Sundance, WY. "He took a simple concept: 'Stay focused and win,' and did just that. He doesn't need gangs or illegal weapons to fight his battles for him. To me, Goldberg is everything a pro wrestler should aspire to be. I only hope he will regain the Heavyweight title. I can't think of a better wrestler to wear the most prestigious title in WCW than Bill Goldberg."

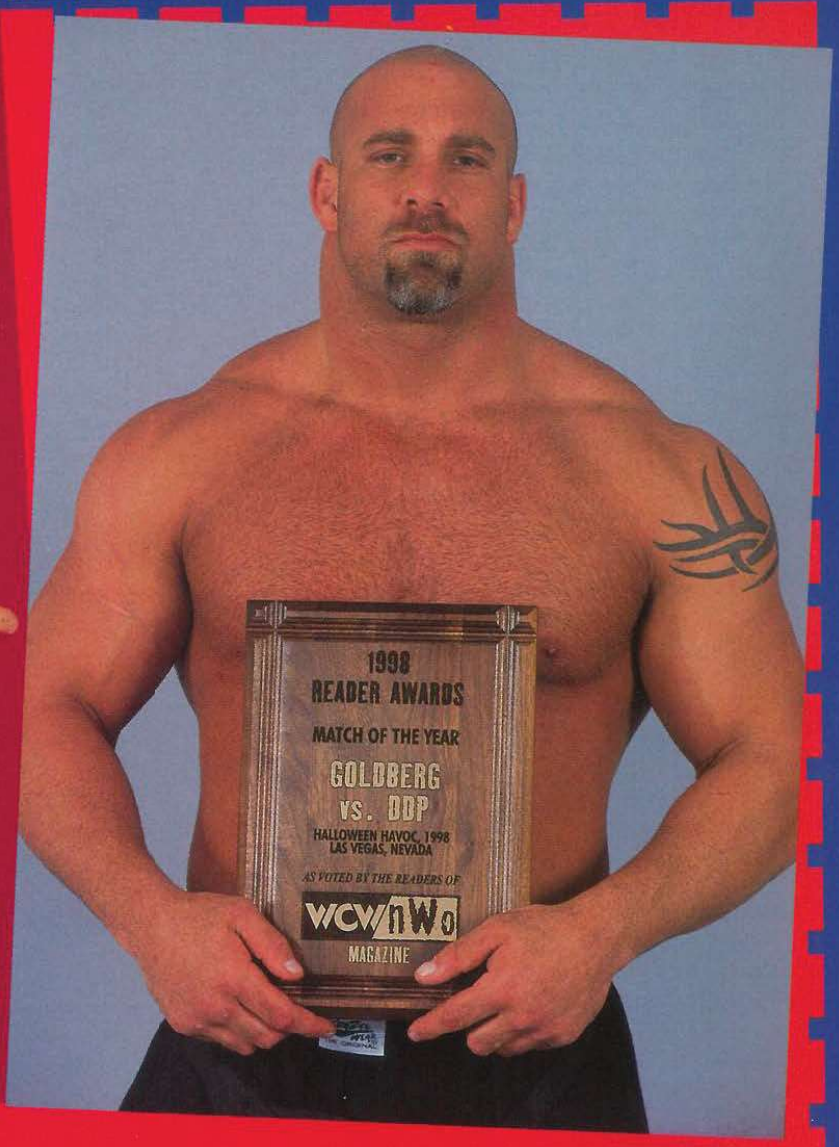
As he beat opponent after opponent last year, this quiet, focused wrestler became the new WCW sensation. Even the toughest ended up victims of the dreaded Spear and Jackhammer combination. A former Atlanta Falcons football player, Goldberg took his gridiron experience and made the transition from football player to pro wrestler in one smooth move. Taking the pro wrestling world by storm, Goldberg managed to down everyone he faced including as Sting, Scott Norton, Raven, Saturn, Hollywood Hogan, and Diamond Dallas Page. A true winner, his 173-0 spoke for itself. The streak was broken by Kevin Nash at Starrcade '98, but Goldberg is back on the road to the gold and is beating everyone who steps in the ring with him. He remains the hunted, the man to beat, with or without a title belt around his waist.

Said Goldberg of his award: "It's an honor just to be in my situation. I mean, what bigger accolade is there to be named by your fans as Wrestler of the Year? That means a lot to me. It means that my hard work has paid off. You know, all the people that have said, and have told me, that I didn't deserve what I got and that I was given everything I got, well, this kind of shoves that proverbial foot up their patoot!"

For Goldberg, the sky is the limit and we predict many more awards and championship reigns for him in the future.

RUNNERS-UP:
2. Chris Jericho
3. Kevin Nash
4. Bret Hart
5. Diamond Dallas Page





MATCH OF THE YEAR

There were many outstanding matches in 1998, but the most difficult choice was which Goldberg match to vote for. Dominating the voting, the way he dominated the year, he managed to snag the voting for the top four matches of the year! The one match that stood out above all the rest in 1998 was Goldberg against Diamond Dallas Page for the World Heavyweight title. The readers felt that the combination of solid wrestling, good old fashioned brawling, and true sportsmanship should be rewarded.

Kevin Dente of Baltimore said, "This was everything I wanted to see in one match. Goldberg is a human wrecking machine and Page is as tough as any wrestler in WCW. When the two collided, it was exciting from bell to bell. The most impressive thing to me was, after the match, Goldberg helped DDP up, and both raised their hands in a sign of true sportsmanship. In a sport where we see so little of that, it was that moment that made the match my choice for Match of the Year."

Goldberg had this to say about his Match of the Year award and snagging the top 4 spots, something that is unprecedented: "To be involved in the top four is something that just floors me right now. That, to me, is unimaginable. I'm kind of speechless. That's really unreal.

"As for Dallas, he can have a rematch any time he wants, along with everybody else in the WCW, but the difference this time will be, I'll knock him out instead of knocking myself out! I respect Dallas to the 9th degree for what he's done, what he continues to do, how he goes about his business, and how hard he works in the ring. I am just honored that we had the Match of the Year and, hopefully, he feels the same way. It was a very tough match and it took everything I had to stay on my feet after I knocked myself out. He was definitely a challenge and it was an entertaining match, not only for the fans, obviously, but I enjoyed it very much. That's what it's all about."

Page had respect for his fellow grappler.

"For pure action and impact, I don't think this match could've been beat. I don't think I've ever seen a match that intense under 15 minutes," Page said. "When I walked out there, I could feel the adrenaline of the people and Goldberg was so psyched then, too, you know. I think I backed up what I said I was gonna do, which was take each of us to a different level. We both took each other up another level and, I think it proved that Goldberg wasn't a one-move wonder, without question. It showed that I could take a lot of punishment, and actually, hand it out, too, because when I got him down, I got on him pretty good. I was concentrating on finding his weaknesses, which there aren't that many of. If anything, it's his (lack of) experience. I think I'd put it down as the greatest match I've ever had.

"By the same token, I think my most memorable match will always be against Randy Savage at Spring Stampede because to beat Savage the first time was really special. No one saw that coming, just like my career. But I think that the Goldberg match was everything I thought it was going to be and more. I am proud of the match even though I lost. That really was the 'it doesn't matter if you win or lose, it's how you play the game' match in my career."

RUNNERS-UP:

2. Goldberg vs. Kevin Nash — Starrcade
3. Goldberg vs. Sting — Nitro
4. Goldberg vs. Hollywood Hogan — Nitro
5. Chris Jericho vs. Juventud Guerrera — Road Wild

CRUISERWEIGHT OF THE YEAR

This was the first year that the wrestlers were separated by weight class, and the voting was a blowout! Kidman, 1998's breakout cruiserweight sensation was far and away the favorite. "I know when Kidman walks down the ramp, no matter who he is facing, the match will be awesome," Lisa Harding of Cleveland said. Bill Reynolds of Muncie, IN agreed. "Kidman really showed how great he was after ditching Raven. He won the Cruiserweight title the very next night after he left The Flock! The others are great and should be commended for their spectacular matches, but Kidman is the one to watch in WCW. He can do it all!"

After holding the Cruiserweight belt for over two months (his first reign) and recapturing it just six days after its loss to Juventud Guerrera, Kidman is the longest reigning Cruiserweight Champion in WCW history.

When you consider the fierce competition within the cruiserweight ranks, Kidman has carved a place for himself in cruiserweight history that was certainly no easy task. Wrestling nearly every week on TV and on just about every Pay-Per-View, Kidman is a hard and dedicated worker whose Shooting Star Press never fails to impress the fans.

Kidman was genuinely surprised when we informed him that he had won the Cruiserweight of the Year award. "I'd like to thank everybody for voting for me," he said. "It's my first major award in WCW. It's the second-best thing next to the belt and I appreciate the support. And keep on watching."

RUNNERS-UP:
2. Chris Jericho
3. Juventud Guerrera
4. Rey Mysterio, Jr.
5. Dean Malenko

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR

With the tag team division spending much of the year in turmoil, the voting in this category took us by surprise. The Outsiders, Hall & Nash, won by a landslide, despite the fact that the two had broken off their friendship in early '98.

"To me, the Outsiders will always be THE tag team in WCW and the nWo," said Kent Williams of Pittsburgh. "They are 'big and bigger,' both incredibly talented and know just how to outsmart their opponents. I have never seen a team work more fluidly together than the Outsiders. My vote goes to them despite the fact that at this moment, they are not regularly teaming. I know it is just matter of time before the Outsiders have tag gold around their waists!"

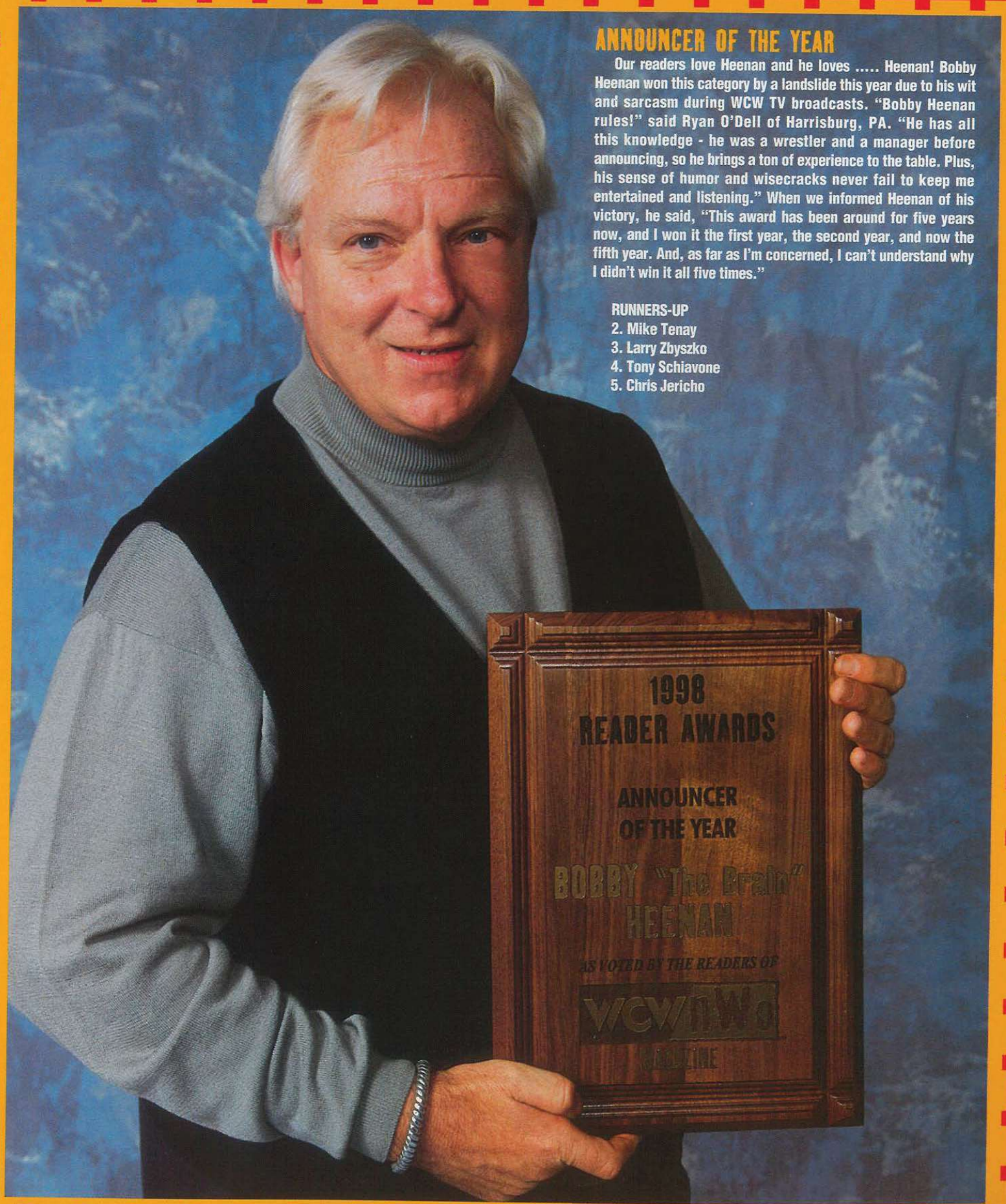
Nash and Hall were typically modest upon receipt of this award.

"Hey yo, Big Kev, how many times did we team together in 1998, two ... maybe three times? And we are still better than all those also-ran Outsider wannabes in WCW. The belts mean nothing without us, and the fans know that,"

Nash added, "It doesn't matter who holds the belts, they're on loan from the Wolfpac, and we can take them back anytime we please."

RUNNERS-UP:

2. Sting & Kevin Nash
3. Chris Jericho & Eddy Guerrero
4. Disco Inferno & Alex Wright
5. Chris Benoit & Dean Malenko

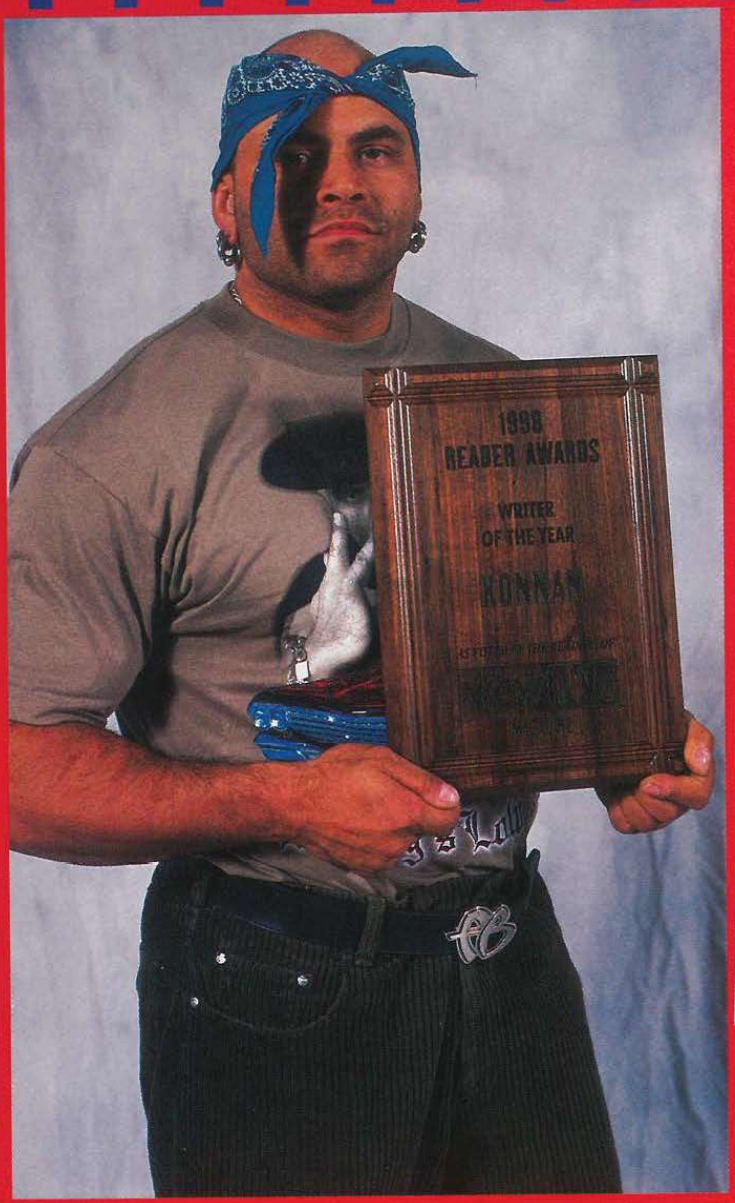


ANNOUNCER OF THE YEAR

Our readers love Heenan and he loves ..... Heenan! Bobby Heenan won this category by a landslide this year due to his wit and sarcasm during WCW TV broadcasts. "Bobby Heenan rules!" said Ryan O'Dell of Harrisburg, PA. "He has all this knowledge - he was a wrestler and a manager before announcing, so he brings a ton of experience to the table. Plus, his sense of humor and wisecracks never fail to keep me entertained and listening." When we informed Heenan of his victory, he said, "This award has been around for five years now, and I won it the first year, the second year, and now the fifth year. And, as far as I'm concerned, I can't understand why I didn't win it all five times."

RUNNERS-UP

2. Mike Tenay
3. Larry Zbyszko
4. Tony Schiavone
5. Chris Jericho



WRITER OF THE YEAR

The winner in this this category is the writer who writes directly to his fans in a way that they obviously enjoy reading. *K-Dogg's Low Ride* came out solidly on top in the voting.

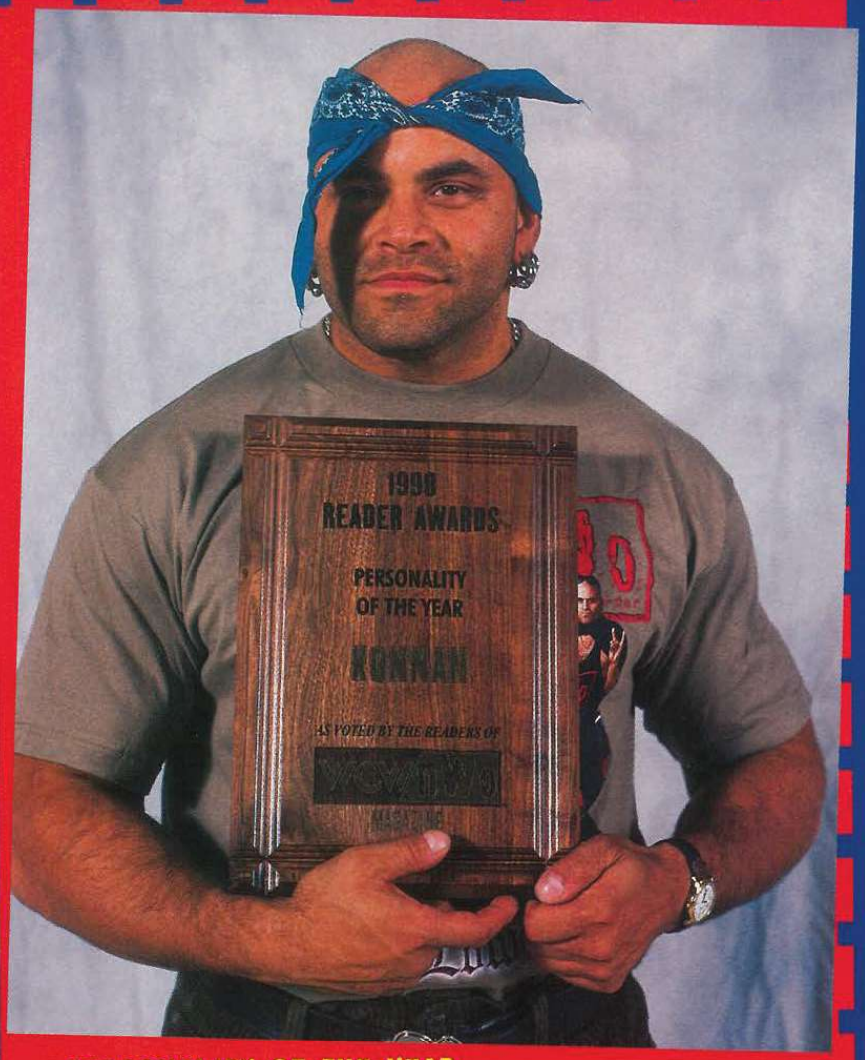
"I like the *Low Ride* because K-Dogg gives his opinions and talks right to us. He doesn't try to talk above us or patronize us, but he seems to be really telling it like it is," said Sandy Bell of Kansas City, KS.

"*K-Dogg's Low Ride* gets my vote because he is cool and he speaks a language all his own. And I like to see what he has to say every month," said Kent Peurovo of San Diego.

For the first time in the Reader Awards history, Konnan has won two distinct awards in two very different categories. No other winner has had the distinction of winning two single awards and that goes to show that the fans truly care about K-Dogg and, according to him, he truly cares about them.

"Like I said, you know, I take these awards with great pride because you, the people, picked your favorites and from the bottom of my heart, I wanna thank you 'cause I said I would always keep it real," he said. "As you've noticed in my column, I always give shout outs to some of my favorite letters and the column is all about you guys, and you guys showed me that you still have much love for me."

RUNNERS-UP:
2. Chris Jericho — *Inside the Jungle*
3. Bret Hart — *Straight from the Hart*
4. Patty Therre — *On the Fringe*
5. Mike Tenay — *Talking Point*



PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

We wanted to know which of the wrestlers, whether a bad guy or a good guy, seemed to have the extra something that made him truly the Personality of the Year. The votes were very close between the winner and the runner-up. Konnan surprised us by taking this category, the first of two wins for the popular Hispanic wrestler. Hot on his heels was Chris Jericho, but like they say, for Jericho it was "always a bridesmaid, never a bride," as he came thisclose to winning this coveted award. K-Dogg pulled out the victory in the final days of voting.

"K-Dogg is the best! When he comes to the ring, I feel like he is talking right to me, to us, the fans. He never lets himself get down and always remembers his peoples, something that I respect very much. His videos are great to watch and everything about him is really cool. When I hear that K-Dogg is coming out, whether it is for a match or an interview, I am glued to my TV set," said Krissy Landsdale of Los Angeles.

"Konnan gets my vote for Personality of the Year because he is true to himself and his people," Oscar Tendez of Ontario wrote on his ballot. "Others may have more time to speak their mind, but nobody makes more of their mic time."

Konnan was appreciative of this award, expressing deep thanks to the readers who voted for him, and was even more shocked when he found out he had won not just this award but that of Writer of the Year as well!

"Yo, to me it's like a big honor to first of all be nominated and then, you know, actually win these two awards, 'cause Colin Bowman, who's the editor of this magazine was telling me, I'm the first double winner so, to me, that's a big honor," he said.

RUNNERS-UP
2. Chris Jericho
3. Kevin Nash
4. Scott Hall
5. Sting

INTERNATIONAL STAR OF THE YEAR

In another extremely close race, Chris Benoit, a native of Calgary, Canada, once again walked away with this honor. Benoit is arguably, pound for pound, one of the best technical wrestlers in the world, and his work ethic supports this statement, match in and match out. Although Chris has never had a singles belt around his waist in WCW, his philosophy is simple: "Do the best I can, wrestle like every match is your last, and walk away proud, win or lose." That he does. Who else would even dare try to do a diving headbutt off the top of a steel cage? Benoit did and walked away unscathed. He clearly disproves the theory that you have to be big to be powerful. Anyone who has been on the receiving end of Benoit's devastating chops will admit that. The readers have long supported Benoit and recognize the talent that this young grappler possesses.

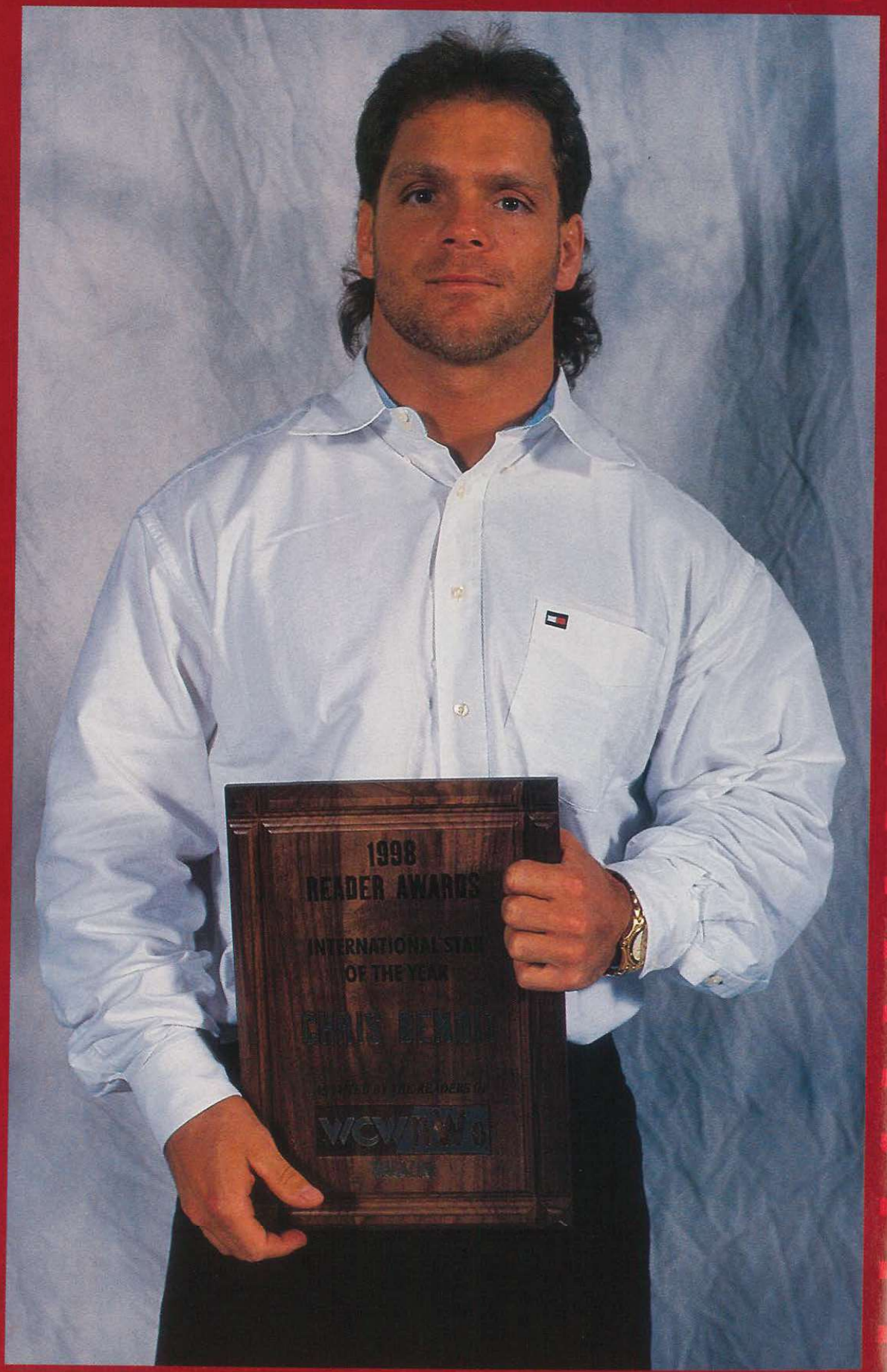
"Chris Benoit could beat anybody, and I do mean anybody, in wrestling today," Jerry Chaslovic of Upper Sandusky, OH, said. "He is the toughest wrestler in any federation as far as I am concerned and it won't be long before his perseverance pays off and a belt is around his waist. But you know, no matter how many near-misses he has, he walks away from each match with more respect from the fans than when he went in. Others may be bigger, but I doubt anyone is better."

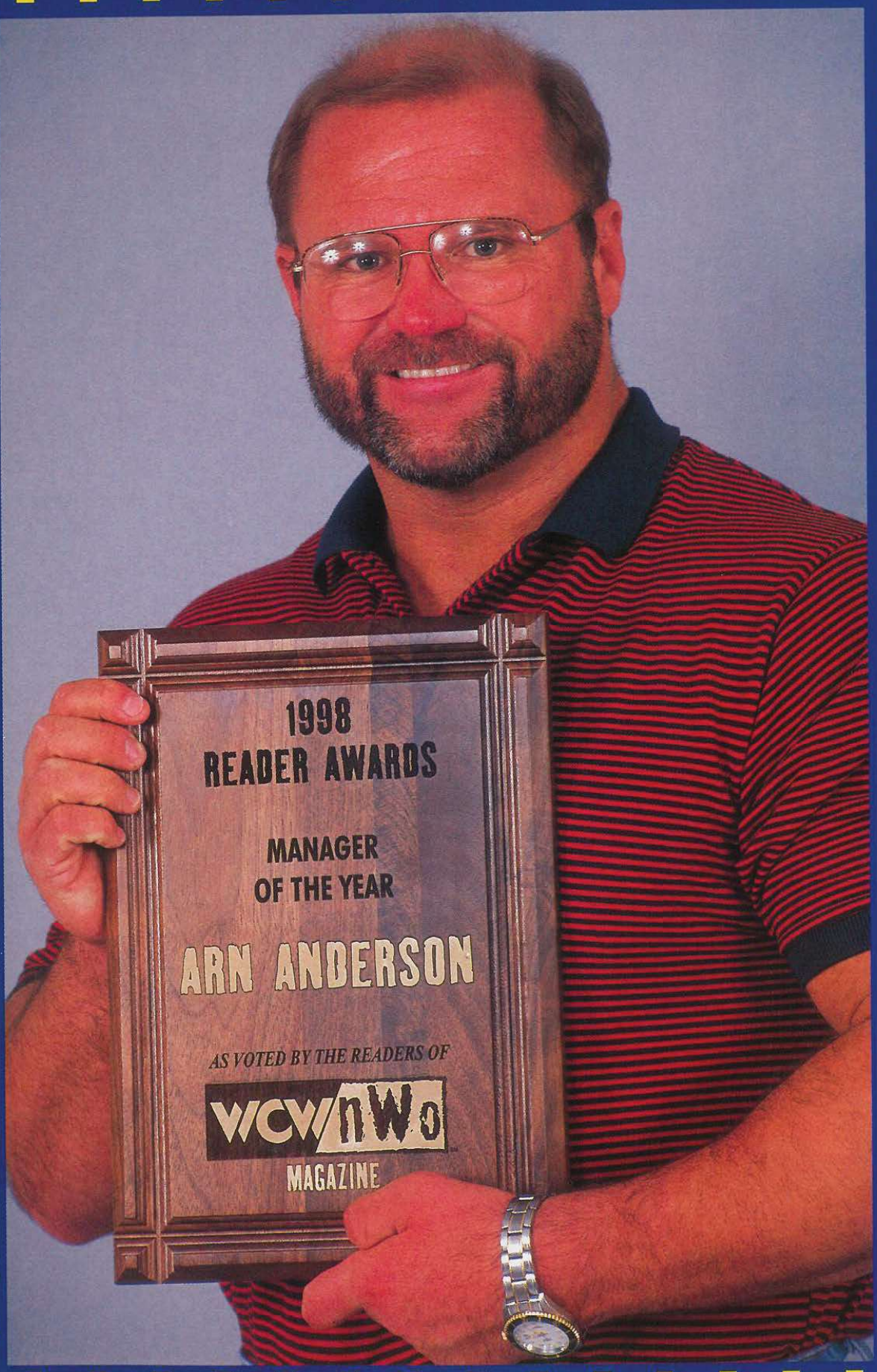
Elizabeth Hawley of New London, WI agrees: "Chris Benoit is as tough as any guy in WCW. That Canadian spirits shines through in every match he is in. You know when Benoit is on the card, there will be a great match no matter who the opponent is."

Chris is a man of few words but said, "While it's an honor to be voted for, and appreciated for what I do, awards are not my motivation."

RUNNERS-UP:

2. Chris Jericho
3. Bret Hart
4. Konnan
5. Juventud Guerrera





MANAGER OF THE YEAR

The name Arn Anderson is synonymous with what pro wrestling is all about. Arn is a no-nonsense, no-frills guy whose wrestling career was tragically cut short by injury. Late last year, he emerged in front of the cameras once again to eventually re-form the Horsemen. Arn Anderson, "The Enforcer" of the elite group was back in the spotlight once again.

"No one beats 'The Enforcer' when it comes to straight talk. He gets on that microphone and tells it like it is. Whether he is wrestling or managing, Arn will always be one of the greatest in the sport," said Timothy Plumman of Jay, FL.

"I really feel that with Arn at the helm, the Horsemen simply cannot lose, no matter who the four men wrestling are," said Liza Tolbert of Louisville, KY.

Readers obviously agreed with that statement as Arn won this category hands down. No one came close in the voting to Arn Anderson, the "Manager-elite" of the Horsemen.

Said Arn, "I spent 15 years as a wrestler and never dreamed that I would be in a managerial role. And it took some coaxing from the Horsemen and the fans. To be honored by this award, which traditionally goes to someone who has put a lot of thought into becoming a manager and has expended all their energy, skill, and knowledge to become the best manager they could be, is amazing. For me just to kind of come in the back door and receive an award of this magnitude ... I'm very, very honored. Thank you."

RUNNERS-UP:

2. Elizabeth
3. Sonny Onoo
4. Jimmy Hart
5. Ralphus

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

What new wrestler stood out as having the most potential? Well, he may not be the most popular guy inside and outside the ring, but that obviously wasn't a factor in the voting. Ernest "The Cat" Miller won for his ability to beat his opponents with and in spite of the "help" of manager Sonny Onoo.

Kathi Johnson of Golden, CO wrote that although she hated "The Cat's" attitude, she had to admit he stood out among the new talent that has emerged over the past two years.

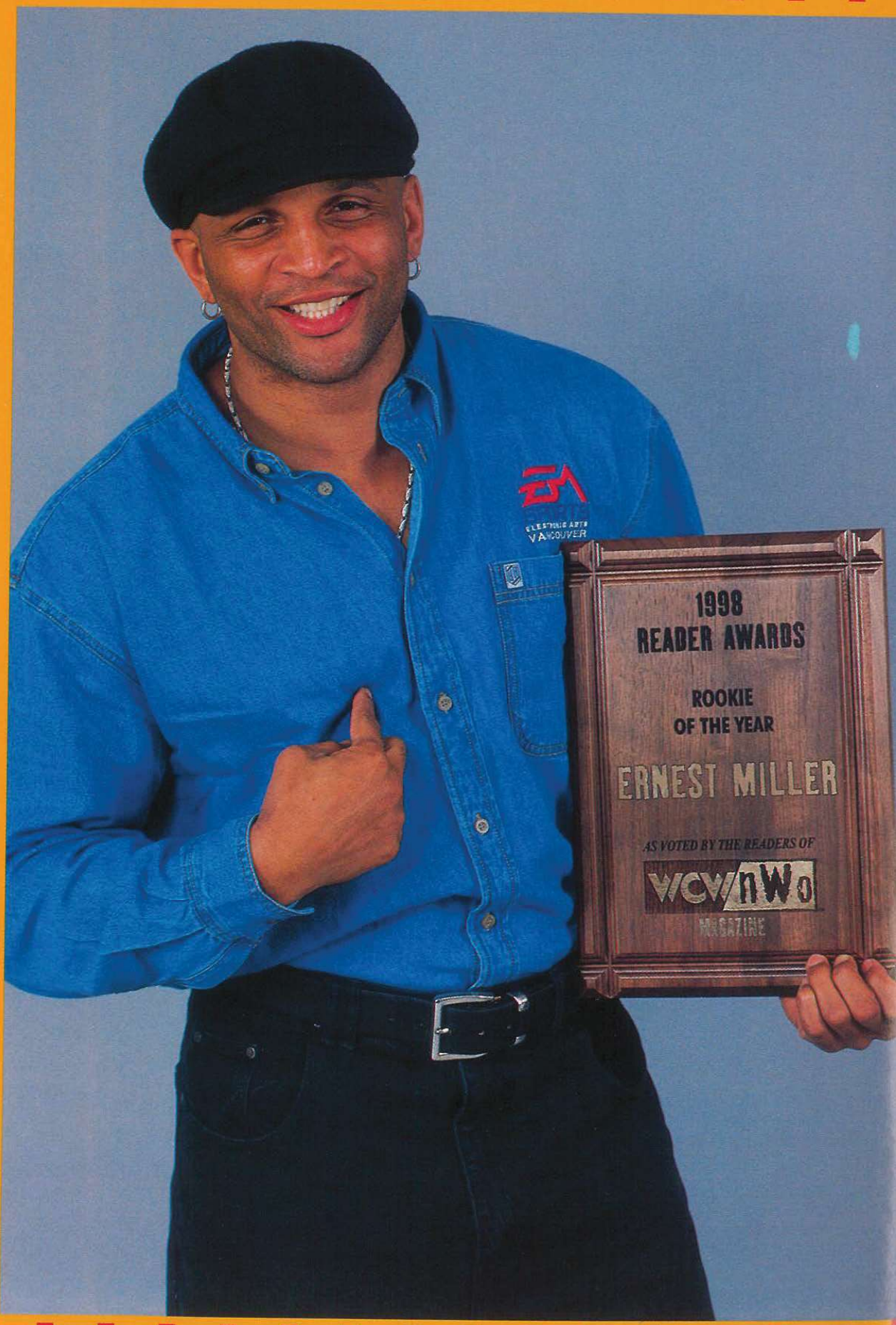
"Ernest Miller has a rotten attitude, but I have to admit he is pretty good in the ring. His martial arts background is really helping him to win matches and I believe he will end up with a belt around his waist soon. He is one guy I love to hate!" said Greere Malone of Austin, TX.

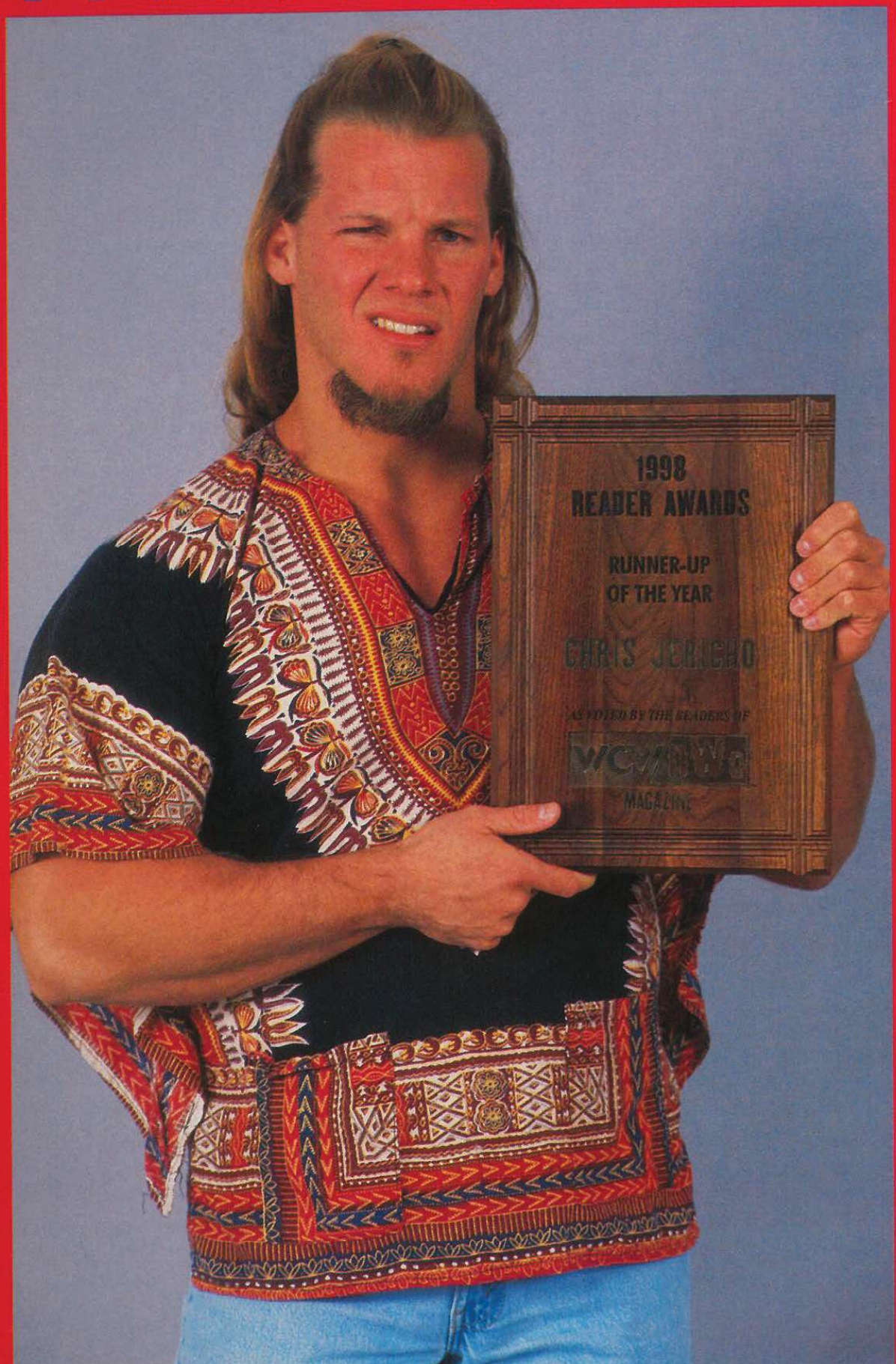
When we told him he was the Rookie of the Year, Miller responded: "Yes I am. It's about time, people. You're about to jump on board because "The Cat" is moving on up. I'm the greatest; I'm a three-time champion, now I'm Rookie of the Year, one time. Can I win that two years back to back? "The Cat" can do anything he wants to do, you know that. I tell you, when you're looking at me, you know I'm beautiful and now I've got the Rookie of the Year award. I've got to be the greatest, man. I told you people, I'm gonna take over.

"People say I have some big footsteps to follow but they ain't that big, because I'm walkin' right through them, you know what I'm saying? I really didn't need the readers because I know those guys are not always for "The Cat" but they got to appreciate me because I'm the greatest. And I get out there and I whoop everybody, I beat everybody, I'm undefeated. It's about time for me to accept this award. Hey, where you goin' ..."

RUNNERS-UP:

2. Sick Boy
3. Goldberg
4. Lodi
5. Horace Hogan





RUNNER-UP OF THE YEAR

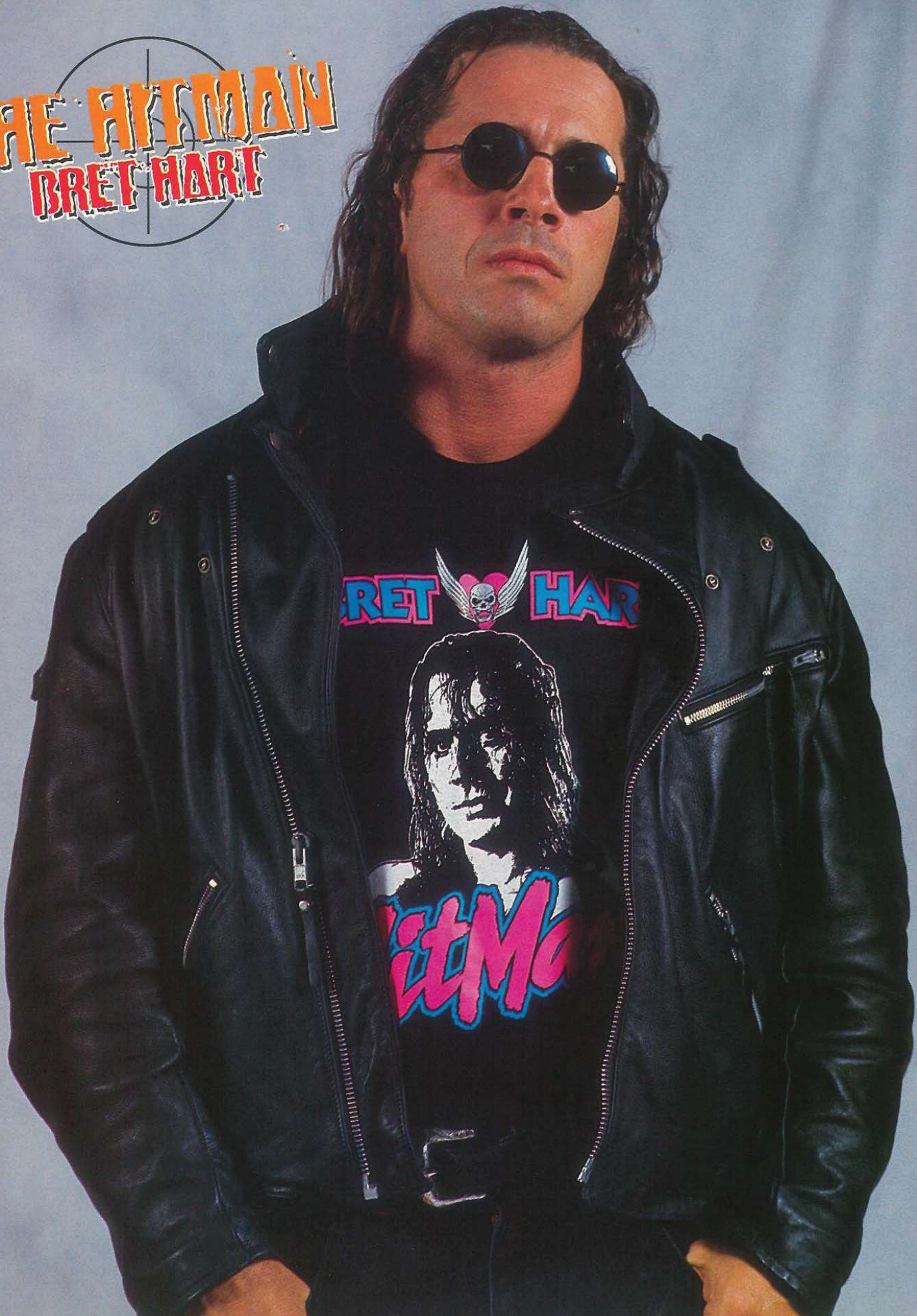
We gave away 10 awards in various categories. Chris Jericho was the runner-up in five, and landed in the top five for two others. His cohort Ralphus, even placed in the top five for Manager of the Year! Chris Jericho is a very popular guy with the fans, as witnessed by the number of votes he received for categories such as Personality, Writer, International Star, and even Announcer of the Year! He came in so close in so many categories, that we just had to create a special "Runner-Up of the Year" Award for Jericho, who, as expected, decided we had conspired against him.

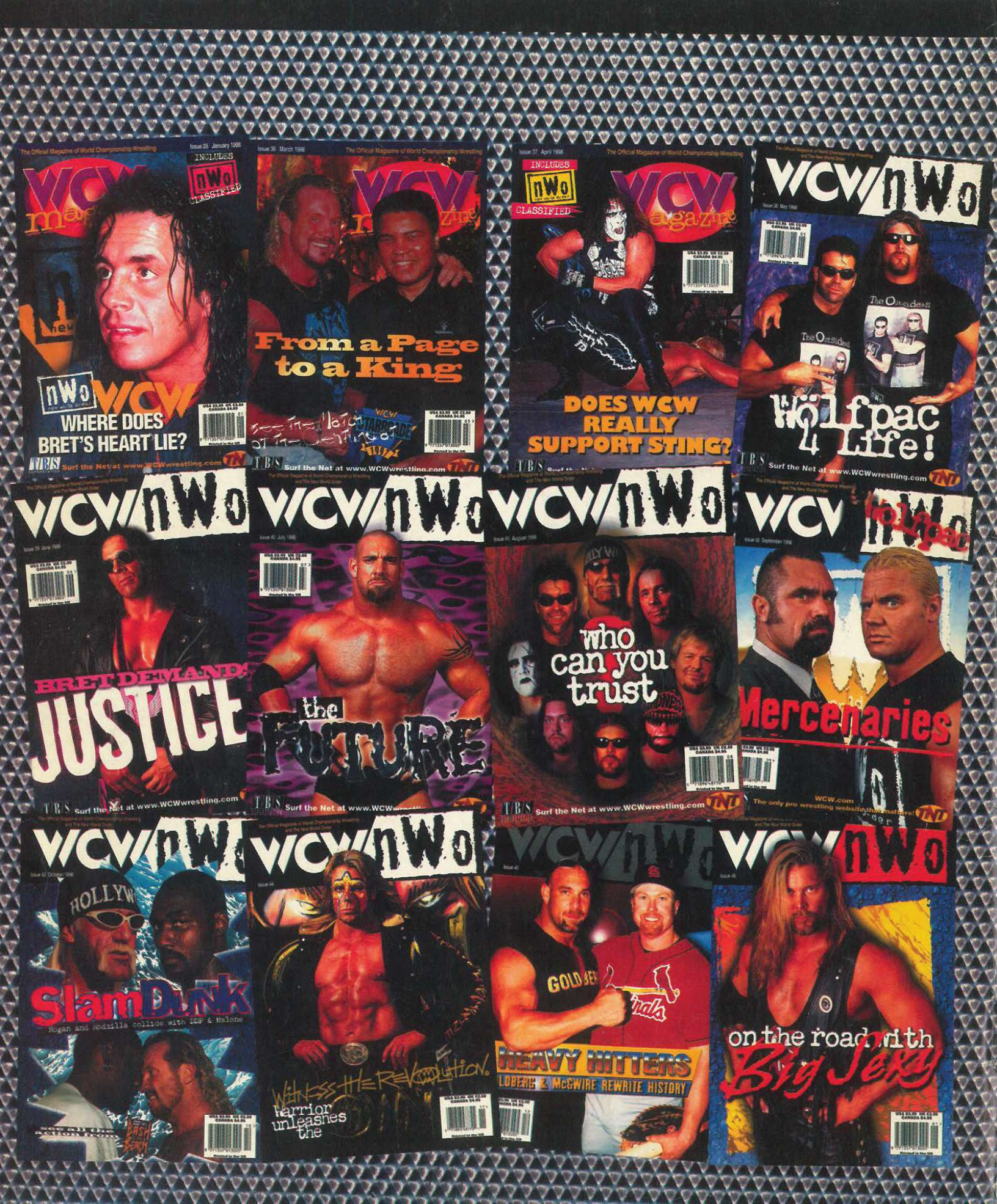
"Well, obviously, this just proves the conspiracy in WCW with the proverbial stuffed suits. Who knows where their heads are at?" Jericho said. "They have no idea who the real talent in WCW is. Personality of the Year - Konnan? Over me? You've gotta be kidding me! Is there a joke in there somewhere? I'm the greatest champion in WCW. Greenberg for Wrestler of the Year? I beat him four times last year! He still hasn't beaten me. I never heard of any kind of a streak. The only streak I know about is the yellow one that runs down his back. Announcer of the Year, Bobby Heenan? I mean, come on! Manager of the Year? I should be winner of all categories because I am the greatest showman in WCW history. I'm the only reason people watch WCW and, most important of all, I'm the only reason people read your stupid magazine. Writer of the Year? That's a total conspiracy against myself from all the stupid writers including Bowman, Ross Boreman, and Patty Cakes or whatever her name is. I mean, come on, do you really think that if I took a survey right now here in this coliseum and asked everybody who the greatest performer in WCW is, who's the greatest columnist, the greatest wrestler, that it would not be obvious it would be me? This is just another conspiracy. I'll take your Runner-up of the Year award only because it gets my picture in the magazine so the people have something else to pin up to their wall."

Better luck next year, Chris.

ODP

THE HITMAN
BRET HART

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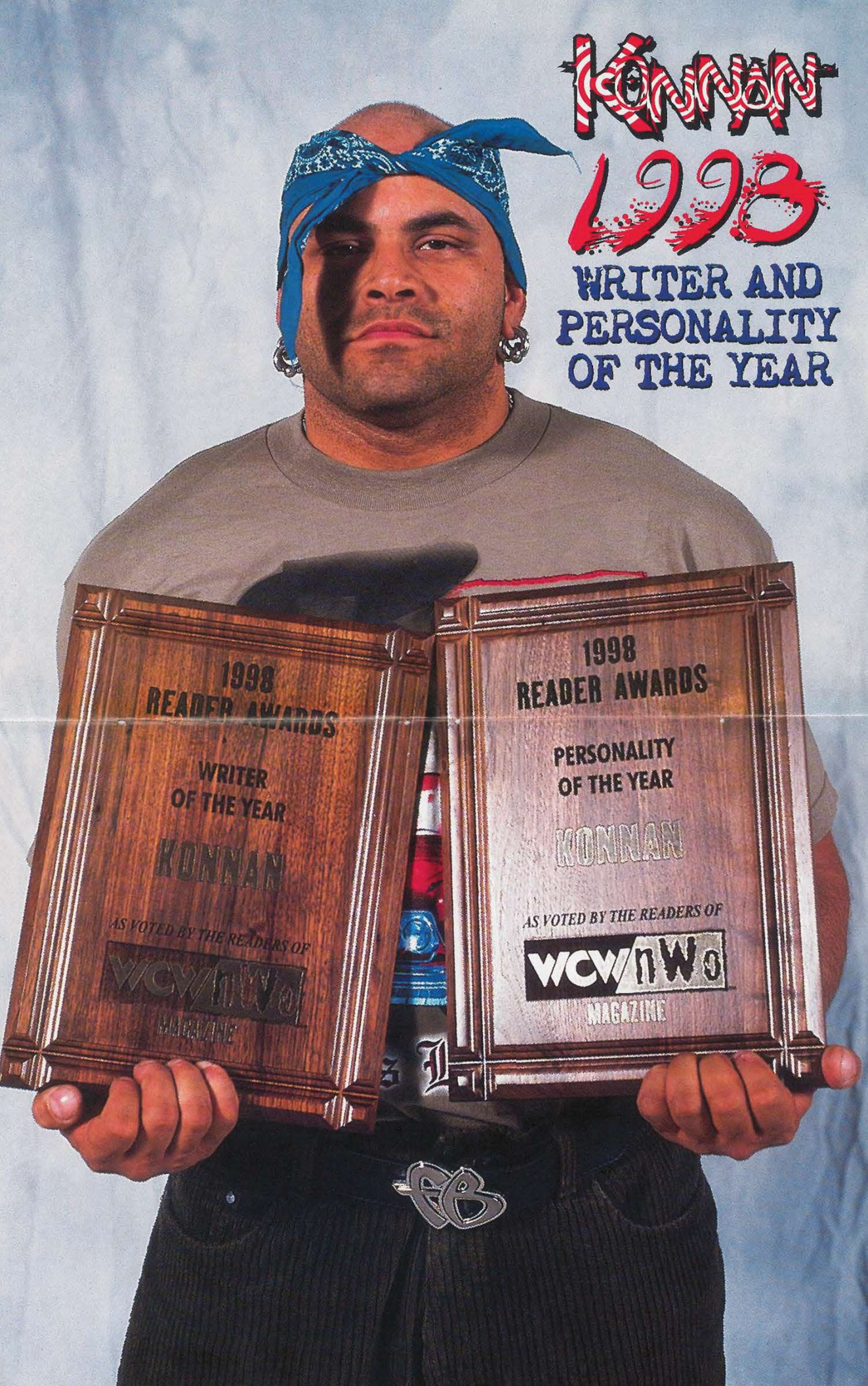
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